THE CASE FOR INDIA



MAHATMA GANDHI

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by

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FOREWORD

THE writer of this little book has recently returned after more than fifteen years of work in India. During that time he has been closely in contact with thousands of educated Indians. He has taught Indian students of all ages from six to twenty-six; and he has had constant opportunities of coming into contact with their parents. He has lived for years in a small country town, and afterwards for years in a great industrial city, where day by day on his way to College he passed cotton mills employing many thousands of workers, to a few of whom he has endeavoured to be of some service, especially in connection with adult education. He believes, in consequence, that he has been able to learn with fair accuracy what it is that Indians really feel and desire concerning the future of their country and the relations between India and England, especially perhaps in connection with industrial problems.

It may be objected that the conceptions set forward in the following pages are in the main of an idealistic and general nature. To such an objection it can only be replied that the Indian mind thinks with great power and acuteness in the realm of abstract ideas, and that these ideas are held with a passionate intensity which it is hard for the average European to comprehend. Ideas constitute quite

literally true and genuine reality to the typical educated Indian. Tagore expresses the mind of his countrymen when he says, in one of his letters, "I feel clearly that the ultimate reality for man's life is his life in the world of ideas, when he is emancipated from the gravitational pull of the dust and he realises that he is a spirit." The extraordinary solidarity of Hindu society amidst invasion, famine and catastrophe, during three thousand years, is sufficient proof of the fact that the Indian mind is not *merely* idealistic, but has the power of rendering ideas operative in practice, by the creation of institutions and systems designed to embody those ideas in concrete actuality.

It may also be objected that much is said in this book about religion. But it must be remembered that in India religion and life are still united. The religious system is one with the social system, and is still intimately connected with economics and politics. The problem, for example, of Hindu-Musalman relationships remains quite incomprehensible till one can think oneself into the attitude of mind in which religion matters everything, because it covers every fact and relationship of life.

It may be advisable to emphasise the fact that in the second part of this book the writer is not expressing his own views, but is endeavouring to interpret those of his Indian friends.

This part of the book is meant to be an objective statement of the views held by educated India, not a critique of those views.

J. S. H.

1929

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PART I

FACTORS IN THE PRESENT SITUATION IN INDIA

Chapter I

THE QUESTION OF ATTITUDE

The Englishman's Lack of Interest in India.

It is common for Indian students who have :udied in England to return to India red-hot Jationalists, with scarcely a single word of good ɔ say about the West. When one talks with such ıen, and tries to get to the heart of their disgust vith European life, it generally becomes clear that ıe one thing above all others which they find nforgivable in the English people is their total ıck of interest in India. Such men complain that 'arliament, though it claims the supreme right of ictating the future of India, can only at rare intervals e persuaded to give a bored and scantily-attended our or two of consideration to Indian affairs. 'hey have become convinced that the average Englishman is only interested in India because it is ainted red on the map, and because he wishes it ɔ remain painted red. They declare that they hemselves have been shunned and even insulted y their English fellow-students; and that no one ıas taken the slightest interest in them, or paid the cantiest attention to them, except persons who ıave wished to make money out of them.

Such "England-returned" Indians form the pearhead of the extremist school of politics. They

are generally enthusiastic for the severance of all connection between England and India, and for this reason above all others, that they feel the careless imperialism of the English—the desire merely to own India, without the will to take any active interest in her—to be not only an insult to their country (and Indians are exceedingly sensitive, both individually and collectively), but a fatally repressive influence upon her whole life.

That it should have been possible for the English Cabinet Minister who was responsible for the destinies of India at a critical point in her history to resign his post in order that he might engage more lucratively in commerce, appears to educated Indians to constitute a crowning instance not merely of the English failure to take a rightful interest in their country, but of the incurable insolence of the English mind, and of the disastrous influence of Imperial relationships both on India and on England. "These people," such Indians say, "are selfish and flippant: they are all the same, from least to greatest, both in individual and in mass; what they care for is their own comfort and profit; they have no real regard for our ancient and sacred country; they cannot comprehend the ideas upon which her life is founded; there is no hope for her until she is wholly freed from their control."

From time to time during the past twenty-five years—during the period, that is, since the Russo-Japanese war, which had an immense effect upon India—hurricanes of fierce political passion have swept over the country. These have resulted in each case from some incident in the relationships

of India and England which has brought home to a proud and highly-strung people the sense of their dependence upon a Power which neither understands them nor cares to understand them. The partition of Bengal, the Amritsar shootings, the appointment of the Simon Commission without an Indian representative, were such incidents. No amount of reasoned justification, no subsequent reversal of a mistake once made, has succeeded in wiping out the evil influences of such incidents upon the relationships between England and India. They have convinced the people of India of the fact that, when all has been said and done, they are under the control of aliens, and of aliens who lack hopelessly in "sympathy" for their country.

Now the very word "sympathy" seems to the average Westerner to be out of place in a political discussion. He believes (in spite of the incredible things wrought by the sentiment of patriotism in the War) that sentimental considerations must be excluded from the practical world of politics. He is almost certainly wrong in regard to the West, and quite certainly wrong in regard to the East.

From time immemorial the East has been governed autocratically. In other words, the personal factor has meant everything to her in the political sphere—and it must be insisted that politics in the East are still inextricably intermixed with religion and with the system of social life. The difference between a "sympathetic" and an "unsympathetic" rule has meant traditionally in India, not merely the difference between a larger or smaller degree of contentedness, but the difference between tolerance

and outrage, between Akbar and Aurangzeb, between loyal co-operation and a fierce and intractable resentment based fundamentally on a realisation of mutual hostility between ruler and ruled.

There is no more serious sign of the times in India than the conviction, voiced nowadays so frequently, that British rule has become hopelessly "unsympathetic." If the adjective were (as indeed it sometimes is) merely "unjust," the situation would be much less serious.

It is essential that English people who wish to take an intelligent interest in India should approach their study of that country in the attitude, not of masters or patrons, but of friendly fellow-citizens, who are anxious not only to understand India, but to gain from her anything which she may be able to give to the West. The realisation in India that any considerable number of English people could possibly take this attitude would in itself work miracles towards the bringing about of better relations between the two countries. As things are, the average educated Indian is firmly convinced that the English are incorrigibly insular and self-sufficient in their outlook, and callously discourteous in their demeanour.

Courtesy.

Nor, it must be confessed, is this estimate altogether without foundation.

If one takes the trouble to talk things out with the type of Indian who is apparently absolutely intransigent in his attitude to England, one will almost always find that the root cause of his bitter-

ness is some unfortunate incident (perhaps of a quite trivial nature, and far back in the past) which has occurred to himself or to some friend of his, and has brought home to him the discourtesy of Europeans. When he was studying in England, someone called him a "nigger." Or one of his relatives, a distinguished Indian official, was once ejected from a railway carriage by an English subaltern who did not wish to travel with "natives." An outstanding instance is that of the rudeness of an English official to Mr. Gandhi early in his career. One such incident has incalculable effect for harm upon racial relationships in India. The news of it spreads far and wide, with great rapidity. Its details are exaggerated; and what was probably in the first instance merely a thoughtless piece of rudeness, becomes the means of convincing numerous Indians that their self-respect demands the severance of the English connection.

Courtesy counts for infinitely more in the East than in the West; and feelings which seem to spring from merely personal sentiment have an extraordinary capacity for poisoning relationships on a very wide scale. The following extract from a studiously "moderate" Indian journal[1] will serve to point the moral:—

> Miss Evelyn M. Bunting, to whose article in the *Contemporary Review* we referred last week, calls attention to the harsh treatment of servants by Europeans in India. She writes: "One of the things that strikes visitors with

[1] *The Indian Social Reformer.*

something of a shock is the way servants are spoken to and spoken of. They must, of course, need a lot of telling, their idea of life is so primitive. But are they not expected—without education or training—to enter into the most complicated trains of reasoning of their highly educated foreign masters at the very briefest words of command? Such service simply cannot be got in England, and it seems time we recognised this new order of things coming in in all the countries, and that our minds adjusted themselves a little to the newer feeling among the people in India. The same lady who says in the sweetest voice to her child of five: 'Betty, would you mind' doing so and so, calls imperatively to her Indian servant, 'Boy, get my book at once; do you hear?' muttering to herself, 'Lazy dog.' And at table wants are apt to be snapped out, 'Boy, tea,' until the unseasoned visitor asks herself, 'Is thy servant a dog?' Apparently there are no words for 'please' and 'thank you' in Hindustani. This is not to suggest that servants are unfairly treated in India. They do not appear to be, though they are expected to be on hand for inordinately long hours. Also they are quite free to leave and go elsewhere. But the attitude has come down surely from the Moghul times. It is *not English*."

Hindustani is not wanting in polite expressions. In fact, the language is so full of polite terms that it is difficult to carry on a conversa-

tion in it within a reasonable limit of time. It is a sight to see two Hindustanis addressing each other before a railway compartment in order to induce each other to get in first. Neither is the Moghul responsible for the Englishwoman's rudeness in India. The Moghul might be cruel, but he is never uncivil, whereas the Englishman—we speak especially of those in India—even when he means to be kind cannot help being boorish. He thinks that politeness is a form of Oriental insincerity which he should not demean himself by adopting.

The Effects of Discourtesy.

The last sentences of this important passage go right to the root of the personal problem which is responsible for much of the disastrous cleavage between England and India. That cleavage is largely an affair of personality, of incompatibility of temperament, of sentiment founded on disgust. The Indian would rather be treated with injustice than with incivility; and he has become convinced, through a long course of years, that Englishmen are not merely discourteous, but domineering and insolent. The average Englishman has his own opinion about Indians; and this opinion may account for some of his incivility. But the incivility is there, and is responsible for a large amount of the modern Indian intransigence.

It is unlikely that Indians realise in this connection either the strain which the Indian climate place upon the European's nerves, or the manner in

which this attitude of incivility has been changed for the better during the past few years.[1] The fact remains that the legend of European discourtesy still endures, and does incalculable harm. It is responsible, for example, for the rumours which are spread on the occasion of any big railway accident, to the effect that Europeans were seen going about and bludgeoning the wounded Indians to death. Such mischievous absurdities, and the kindred ideas (still extraordinarily prevalent) that epidemics and calamities of various kinds are engineered by Government in order to reduce the Indian population, could only arise in an environment saturated with distrust of the European, distrust which is largely caused by this tradition of European discourtesy.

Such phenomena may be "sentimental" in nature; but they are obviously exceedingly dangerous, especially amongst a sensitive and imaginative people, and at a point in history where the future both of India and of the British Empire demands above all things mutual comprehension and good-will.

It may be objected that discourtesy towards Indians, and lack of interest in India on the part of Englishmen, are balanced by aloofness, suspicion and an incurable tendency to impute evil motives on the part of Indians. These tendencies do

[1] It is probably true that the majority of "incidents" occurring nowadays in which incivility is shown to Indians by Europeans are caused not by pure Europeans but by half-castes. These latter are apt to be more domineering and offensive than true Europeans.

undoubtedly exist; but things being as they are at present, with England in control of the destinies of India, the responsibility for *rapprochement* rests unquestionably upon the English people. If better relationships are to be established, the first move—and it must be an effective one or it will be worse than useless—must come from the side of England.

The Place of Generosity in English-Indian Relationships.

There is no people on earth so readily influenced by generosity and friendliness as the Indian. After the release of Mr. Gandhi from jail in 1924 (the most hopeful point in recent Indian history), a prominent Nationalist leader declared in the Indian Legislative Assembly, "Deal generously with us, and we are your men."

There is a mischievous opinion abroad amongst Europeans in India that it is race-treachery ever to confess to an Indian that one is wrong, or to ask his pardon for any mistake made. This delusion finds its expression on a national scale in the often disastrous tenacity with which Government will adhere to a mistaken policy in the belief that "prestige" will be damaged if anything like a confession of failure is permitted. In reality Indians, being innately courteous themselves, are extraordinarily open to the influence of courtesy in others. In the sphere of individual relationships a frank acknowledgment of any mistake which may have been made, and a generous effort to put things right, will make an Indian one's friend for life. The same would undoubtedly be true in the sphere of international relationships.

Courtesy and generosity are essential to the setting right of the relations between India and England. India feels, with a deep and growing resentment, that the Englishman is an insolent boor; for he does not care to understand the country which he regards himself as owning, and is interested only in continuing to own and exploit her. Since personalities count for more than policy in the East, the existence of this feeling about the Englishman is a menace to the well-being of the British Empire. It is even more important and more dangerous than the feeling that England, as a political entity, has failed to accord to India, as a political entity, the treatment which should have been accorded to her.

There is only one way in which these two elements of resentment can be overcome. That is, the way of courtesy and generosity. By that way they can and must be overcome.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF THE NEW NATION

The Early Years of this Century.

THE origin of Indian nationalism may be said to go back some forty-five years, to the foundation of the Indian National Congress, which rapidly became an organ of expression for national ambitions and national grievances. The partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon's government, in 1905, which was only carried through against fierce opposition, served as an immense stimulus to the national movement; for it was a measure striking directly at the patriotic feelings of the Bengali race, the most advanced, enlightened and self-conscious of the Indian races. The partition resulted in an outburst of violent agitation, in an ugly series of anarchical crimes, in the floating of the Swadeshi movement (which endeavoured to persuade Indian buyers to purchase only Indian-made goods) and in a boycott of the manufactured products of Great Britain. About the same time the victory of Japan over Russia had the effect of greatly increasing the national feeling in India. If one Oriental nation could defeat a Western nation at its own game of war, why should another Oriental nation submit to being ruled without its own consent by another Western nation?

The Rowlatt Act.

During the Great War, which (as we were constantly being reminded) was fought to free weak nations from foreign domination and to make the world safe for democracy, national feeling increased apace, especially in the South, where Mrs. Besant's Home Rule League led the way. When the War was over, and it was realised how great were the services which India had performed for the British Empire during its course, a widespread and confident belief arose that England would reward those services by some signal act of generosity, by the granting, for instance, of a scheme of self-government much wider than the niggardly measure (as it was regarded in Nationalist circles) of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

Unfortunately, however, we British committed at this point one of those fatal and tragic mistakes which poison almost beyond recovery the relationships of peoples. We answered India's confident expectation of generous treatment for her services during the War by the Rowlatt Act. This Act was not in itself an especially tyrannous piece of legislation. In certain parts of India there existed conditions of anarchical crime which seemed to point directly to the necessity for setting up special tribunals and for some more summary process of jurisdiction than that usually obtaining. Psychologically, however, the forcing through of the Act at such a time, against the united opinion of the whole of India, was a blunder of the first magnitude. The inevitable result was a fierce outburst of

indignation from end to end of the country. Mr. Gandhi, who had risen to fame through his fearless championship of the rights of his fellow-Indians in South Africa, and through the interest which he had taken in certain questions of labour-exploitation in Bihar, came forward as leader of the universal opposition to the Rowlatt Act. He launched his campaign of *Satyagraha* (Passive Resistance). The movement rapidly developed; and the Government was faced with a novel situation—a growing demand from the Indian people as a whole (not merely from the intellectuals) that the obnoxious measure should be withdrawn.

The Amritsar Tragedy.

In April 1919 Mr. Gandhi was proceeding to the Punjab (where the feeling was strongest and most vocal against the Act) for the purpose of furthering his agitation. At a wayside station on the Punjab border an official notice was served on him that he must not proceed farther. He was removed from the train, and shipped back again in the opposite direction by another train. When news of this occurrence (which was misrepresented as an arrest) reached the highly excited populations of the North, there was fierce rioting at Delhi, Amritsar, Lahore and elsewhere, in the course of which several Europeans were cruelly done to death; and banks were looted. Then followed something like a panic on the part of the authorities; and the British General in military command of Amritsar, finding that his orders forbidding public meetings had been disobeyed, fired upon an unarmed crowd of some

ten thousand Indians assembled in the Jallianwala Bagh at that city. It was later established that adequate notice had not been given to allow for the dispersal of the crowd. As afterwards (some considerable time afterwards) transpired, the casualties from the firing amounted to many hundreds. According to the official commission established to inquire into the affair, three hundred and seventy-nine persons were killed, and probably three times that number wounded. When the real facts leaked out (largely as a result of an independent inquiry set on foot by the Indian National Congress), there was a cry of horrified indignation from the whole country. Matters were made still worse when, the belated official inquiry having been instituted, the General responsible for the Amritsar tragedy openly justified his action before it on the ground that the firing had saved India from a second mutiny. He also accounted for his failure to warn the crowd before firing on the ground that "They would all come back and laugh at me, and I considered I would be making myself a fool." Sinister incidents, such as the failure of the troops to care for the wounded after firing, and (above all) the monstrous "crawling order,"[1] were also accounted for in a fashion which infuriated public opinion still more.

There is a curious parallelism between the Amritsar firing of 1919 and the Peterloo firing at Manchester in 1819. Of each of them it may be

[1] By this order all Indians proceeding along a street where a European lady missionary had been half killed by the mob were forced to crawl on their bellies. This insult was resented even more than the firing.

said that they rendered for ever impossible a repetition of such "vigorous action" on the part of the Government responsible. The belated news of what had actually happened gave in each instance an immense stimulus to the movement of emancipation, and proved in the long run a deadly blow to the forces of repression and reaction.[1]

Non-Cooperation.

The result of the Amritsar firing was an extraordinary access of popularity to the national move-

[1] The "Peterloo massacre" took place at Manchester in 1819. A great reform meeting had been called, and was attended by a crowd of some 80,000 people, dressed in their Sunday clothes, and apparently perfectly orderly. One-third of the crowd were women. There were many children also amongst them. The organisers of the meeting had taken energetic precautions against violence or rioting. It gathered to demand universal suffrage, vote by ballot, annual parliaments, and the repeal of the cruel Corn Laws, which made the poor man's bread exorbitantly dear. Hunt, a noted popular orator, was speaking, when the yeomanry advanced brandishing their swords to arrest him. Having effected this, the troopers began to cry, "Have at their flags," and started striking all around them. "The magistrates then gave the order to charge. In ten minutes the field was deserted except for the dead and wounded, and banners, hats, shawls and bonnets. . . . Eleven people died, two of them women and one child, and over four hundred were wounded, one hundred and thirteen being women. Of the wounded more than a quarter were wounded by the sword. So bitter were the hatreds and suspicions of class, that wounded men and women did not dare to go to hospital for treatment, for fear it should be discovered that they had received their wounds at Peterloo. . . . The magistrates, Hussars and yeomanry were thanked by the Government." (Hammond: *The Town Labourer*, p. 91.)

ment, and an extraordinary increase also in the bitterness of Indian feeling against England. Meetings of protest were held all over the country. Festivities and processions organised by the authorities to celebrate the victory of the cause of the allies in the Great War were resolutely boycotted. On the route of such processions shops were closed as a sign of national mourning, and (in one city at least) banners were hung out of windows bearing the words, "Remember the Punjab." There was a general feeling that the happenings at Amritsar rendered rejoicings over the defeat of Prussianism in the War, to say the least of it, inopportune.

In 1920, in order to claim redress for the Amritsar tragedy, Mr. Gandhi and the National Congress, at a special session of the latter, launched the Non-Cooperation Movement. In doing so they formed an alliance with the Musalman opponents of the Treaty of Sèvres, who were determined, whether by constitutional means or otherwise, to obtain for Turkey a revision of that Treaty. Thus was inaugurated a united and intensive campaign, which had an immense influence upon the growth of Indian national feeling. Various methods of propaganda were adopted; and a number of forms of non-cooperation with the British were recommended to patriotic Indians desirous of making known their protest against Amritsar and the Treaty of Sèvres. All students in schools and colleges maintained or aided by Government were urged to leave those institutions. Lawyers were called upon to give up practising in the Law Courts. Those who held titles and honours from

Government were exhorted to surrender them; and it was decided to boycott the elections for the new legislative councils, central and provincial, which were to be set up under the Reform Scheme of 1917.

The boycott of schools and colleges was undoubtedly a most serious mistake; for it is essential that India, if she wishes to stand on her own feet and to make her own way in the modern world, should possess a constantly increasing supply of educated leaders. However, the campaign succeeded for the time being in doing very extensive damage to the educational system. In a typical College, for instance, there were some three hundred students before the Christmas holidays of 1920, during which Non-Cooperation was proclaimed. After those holidays there were for a time five students only; and it was several years before the former level was attained once more. For a time education—or at any rate secondary and higher education—was almost at a standstill. Many thousands of students permanently abandoned their studies, and went out to spread the gospel of Non-Cooperation in the remote country districts. The loss to India in the educated men so sorely needed if she is to be guided successfully into democratic self-government, was grievous and tragic in the extreme.

The boycott of the Law Courts, and the surrender of tithes and honours, never came to very much; and the Nationalist party soon ceased to lay emphasis on these obviously ineffective items in its programme; but the boycott of the council elections

had interesting results. For instance, in some districts, as a means of showing the popular dissatisfaction with the Reform Scheme, low-caste or even untouchable members were elected to the new legislatures. In one case an attempt was even made to elect a donkey. The most interesting result of this campaign of ridicule was that it gave to the outcastes a representation in the Councils which they might otherwise have lacked, and that it thus stimulated their increasing demand for social freedom and a decent chance in life. More than this, the work of the Councils was greatly expedited, and the difficult initial period of their career was made infinitely easier than it might have been, by the fact that they did not at first include representatives of the intransigent extremist party. Had such representatives been elected, they might have rendered the working of the Councils impossible from the beginning, and so have struck a deadly blow at the development of representative institutions in India. As it was, the new system had a chance to get upon its feet unhampered by any such process of parliamentary obstruction as that perfected in England by Parnell, or as that subsequently adopted in certain of the Indian provincial Councils by the Swarajist party.

Malegaon and Chauri Chaura.

Meanwhile a Non-Cooperation campaign of great intensity was being carried on amongst the country villages; and it soon became evident that this campaign was destined to create an entirely new situation in India. For the first time in history the

peasants were becoming politically conscious, and were beginning to share in the demand for freedom and Home Rule. They were beginning, moreover, to become imbued with a vague but ominous feeling that the British *Raj* had dealt unfairly and oppressively with India.

It was extraordinary in how short a space of time the war-cry of Non-Cooperation ("Victory to Mahatma Gandhi") and the chief planks in its platform became familiar things to the people even in remote villages. As the campaign went forward during those anxious months of 1921, India was attaining self-conscious nationhood at headlong speed.

From the beginning Mr. Gandhi had placed the most insistent emphasis upon the necessity for adopting strictly non-violent methods in promoting the national cause. He had declared in season and out of season that the battle for Indian freedom was to be fought and won, not by force, but by the sword of the spirit, by non-resistance to oppression and evil (as he regarded the domination of the "Satanic British Government"), by humility and readiness to suffer whatever might come without forcible retaliation. It is unquestionable that in this, as in the other aspects of his work, Mr. Gandhi was whole-heartedly sincere. His influence was so strong as to make him in a few months' time almost a legendary figure, supposed by the common people to be able to work miracles, and worshipped by millions of them as an incarnation of God.

At the same time it must be recognised that, in spite of his great moral authority, his sincerity, his

simplicity, his unvarying insistence upon the necessity for non-violence, Mr. Gandhi did not show that he possessed the qualities of an experienced statesman. His limitations in this respect may be illustrated from his endeavour to wreck the educational system, and from the very one-sided character of his alliance with the Musalman-Khilafat party—the leaders of which paid only a very perfunctory lip-service to his ideas concerning non-violence, and unquestionably had their own views of what might be made out of the "Heads I win, tails you lose" nature of the pact with the Hindus.

Mr. Gandhi's lack of political experience is, however, chiefly to be seen in his belief that the mass of a vast population such as that of India could be so completely dominated by an ethical ideal (and one demanding such extreme self-control and submission of spirit as that of non-resistance to evil) as to remove all danger of a violent outburst from the pent-up forces of indignation which had been aroused. It is true that an astonishing measure of success was achieved in this self-disciplining of the masses; but it soon became clear that the tension was too severe to be long maintained without tragedy. In April 1921 an ugly incident occurred at a small town in the Bombay Presidency, called Malegaon, where some Indian police officers were done to death by a mob led probably by Khilafat agitators. In August there followed the terrible Moplah outbreak in South-Western India, again the work of Khilafat agitators. This outbreak attained the dimensions of a widespread insurrection. A vast amount of damage was done; and—

worst feature of all—some thousands of Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam under circumstances of peculiar cruelty and insult.

Early in 1922 there was another horrible affair, this time at a village called Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces, where some twenty policemen were knocked on the head and their bodies burnt. Mr. Gandhi's sincerity is shown by the fact that, though he was by this time at the very pinnacle of his power and fame, he publicly deplored the incident as a proof that the nation was not fit for *Swaraj*,[1] did penance for his " Himalayan blunder " in supposing that non-violence could be universally maintained, and (regardless of his personal prestige) immediately called off those features in his campaign (especially the organised non-payment of taxes) which were calculated most dangerously to excite the common people.

The Arrest.

Not long after this the Government, seizing the opportunity thus offered by Mr. Gandhi's retirement from his more extreme positions, decided to arrest the great popular leader. The arrest was carried out under circumstances of the greatest consideration for Mr. Gandhi's personal feelings; yet few who were in India at the time will forget the day when it occurred. It must be remembered that in 1919, upon the mere rumour of an arrest of Mr. Gandhi, fierce rioting had taken place in various localities, and that his fame and popularity were in 1919 not one hundredth part of what they were in

[1] Home Rule.

1922. There was considerable apprehension that the arrest would mean widespread rioting, and perhaps worse. But the day passed off in complete quietness. No shops even were shut—the universal sign of public resentment and unrest in India. A day or two later, when it had become apparent that the arrest had been received with complete tranquillity all over the country, the present writer asked one of his students the reason for this extraordinary calm. The student replied, "Sir, you know that the Mahatma forbade us to use any violence if he were arrested, or even to show any open sign of mourning. We were merely obeying his orders." This was true for the whole of India. In obedience to the command of a great moral teacher, who was also a passionately adored national leader, and for whom millions would gladly have given up their lives, the people had everywhere abstained from all public expression of grief or resentment at his arrest. Perhaps a nation has never been more truly great than was the new-born Indian nation during those days of self-control in face of the loss of Mahatma Gandhi. Certainly no nation has ever come into being under more idealistic leadership or amidst more strange and remarkable circumstances.

When the trial came on, its course was followed with strained attention from end to end of the country. In numbers of periodicals and newspapers it was compared in detail to the trial of Jesus Christ. Indeed at that time it was extraordinary how the mind of India, in reverent allegiance to her great leader, compared him in many aspects of his character and activity, not to her own great

religious leaders of the past, but to the Man of Nazareth. The trial was conducted with courtesy and consideration on the part of the Bombay Government; and although Mr. Gandhi was condemned to six years' imprisonment, yet the manner in which the sentence was uttered was such as to honour rather than disgrace the man who was to be imprisoned, and the country which he represented. It was made clear by the judge that here was a leader of the highest integrity of character, a true saint, who was imprisoned because his message was too high and noble to be comprehended and followed by the mass of his countrymen.

After his release, early in 1924,[1] Mr. Gandhi turned his efforts (as soon as he was in some degree recovered from the effects of a severe operation, performed under very difficult circumstances by a European surgeon)[2] to the crying need for re-establishing the old spirit of friendliness and unity between the Hindu and Musalman communities. To this end, in the autumn of 1924, he performed a complete fast lasting twenty-one days. This fast had the effect of concentrating the public opinion of India as never before upon the necessity for a better relationship between the two communities—

[1] Mr. Gandhi's release created a great impression in India. Such stalwart intransigents as the Musalman leader, Mr. Muhammad Ali (and also the Bombay Municipality) called for a "change of heart" towards England as a result of it.

[2] Mr. Gandhi's relations with many individual Englishmen are of the most cordial character, and on this and other occasions he has been quick to acknowledge with courteous gratitude services performed to him and to his country by Europeans.

a necessity which had been emphasised by numerous outbreaks of rioting between Hindus and Musalmans in various parts of India. By his fast Mr. Gandhi stepped back into leadership of the national movement, and once more concentrated the attention of his fellow-countrymen upon moral issues as prior to and underlying political issues.

The Significance of Mr. Gandhi.

The significance of Mr. Gandhi, and of his methods of work, may be considered from various points of view. He may be thought of as the leader of a great national movement, and as leading it by reason of his idealism rather than his practical statesmanship—a Mazzini who relies upon the sword of the spirit. But he is more than this; he is a nationalist, but a nationalist after no Western pattern. He is a political thinker who finds himself at war with the theory and nature of the modern state. His views of life and of society are Tolstoyan to the root. He condemns the state because it is founded on acquisitiveness, on the exploitation of the weak, on the exercise of organised force. It is not so much the British State in India that he fights, as the state in general. It is true that he is resolutely opposed to the British Government in India, but this is because it embodies in a particular instance the evils which he would fight on a world-wide scale.

As has already been said, Mr. Gandhi is a great moral teacher. He is a man who has succeeded in forcing upon the imagination of a vast community his vision of that kingdom which gains its ends

of righteousness and freedom not by violence, but by non-resistance to evil. Although he failed as a practical statesman, the fact remains that this ascetic and prophet has brought into the world a new type of national idealism, founded on the assertion of great moral principles, not on the violent avenging of national wrongs and the forcible vindication of national rights. The nationalism of which he is the leader and seer is in a sense a new "ethical nationalism," in a world where nationalism hitherto has meant too often aggressive and self-assertive violence. We shall return to this subject later; in passing from it now, emphasis must once more be laid upon the fact that there has arisen in our day and generation a man able to make so vividly attractive the ideas which he has gained from the New Testament (of which Mr. Gandhi is a regular and devout reader), that those ideas, and the man himself as their exponent, could capture the imagination and command the adoration of three hundred and twenty million human beings.

The National Movement in Recent Years.

For several years after 1924 the National Movement proceeded quietly, but in 1927 there was an extraordinarily unanimous revival of bitterness against England, occasioned by the appointment of the Simon Commission, which was charged with considering the political future of India, but did not contain any Indian representative. No subsequent attempts made by Sir John Simon and his colleagues to remedy this mistake sufficed to re-establish public confidence in the Commission, or

to wipe out the bad impression which had been created.

Meanwhile, a significant "left wing" of the Nationalist Movement came into evidence, largely inspired by the ideals of Moscow, and resolved to bring into play, as rapidly as possible, methods of physical force for the attainment of complete national independence.

Chapter III

HINDUISM

Image-Worship.

It is notoriously hard to define Hinduism. To obtain concrete conceptions, reliable and of general application, regarding the nature of that great system of thought and faith would be the task of a lifetime; and when it had been accomplished, if it ever were, the investigator would only find at the end of the lifetime that large areas of thought and practice had been overlooked, and that in those which had been included, the steady evolutionary development which is going forward amongst Hindus had already rendered the fruits of his labour valueless.

At the same time, it is impossible to understand India if an attempt is not first made to understand Hinduism.

The more a European sees of India, and the harder he tries to understand India, the more powerfully will it be brought home to his mind that at the heart of the Hindu religious system lies, not the wonderful Hindu philosophy, nor the infinite multitude of ceremonies which the orthodox Hindu must perform, nor even the melancholy yet majestic conception of *Karma*, but the bond of friendly familiarity which binds the ordinary man

to his god, and interprets the divine to him through the medium of an image. The average pious Hindu goes daily to visit the image in its temple and to serve it there. Such worship bears to his mind the character of a familiar call upon an old acquaintance. He feels the god to be a personal friend of himself and his family—not something distant and awful and incomprehensible, but someone closely connected with his own life and interested in its every detail.

It is extraordinary with what enthusiasm even the most highly educated Hindus give themselves up from time to time to the worship of their favourite representation of the divine. Instances may be found especially in the Ganpati worship, as it is carried on in the Maratha country, and in the worship of Saraswati in other parts of India. In College hostels a large proportion of the students will set up images of these divinities in their rooms, and honour them assiduously during the days of the annual worship. In many homes of distinguished barristers and councillors, men who have enjoyed several years of study at an English University, the worship of the family image will be carried on with the greatest devotion and enthusiasm; and when the "puja" is over, the image will be escorted in pomp by all the members of the family, young and old, to the nearest river or tank, there to be ceremoniously cast into the water.

It goes, of course, without saying that the Westerner should never permit himself hastily or thoughtlessly to disparage or condemn this or any other aspect of modern Hinduism. He may feel

convinced that the practice of idol-worship maintains an unworthy conception of God before the minds of countless millions who are unable to distinguish, as the intellectuals always affirm that they themselves distinguish, between the image and the spiritual being whom it is intended to represent. He may regard as disastrous to the progress and enlightenment of India the various superstitious practices with which idolatry is closely connected. He may see a score of other grievous faults in it. But at the same time it cannot be denied that the practice of image-worship brings the idea of the divine into familiar and practical contact with the lives of the common people; and there is something at least gained when a man realises, however dimly and grotesquely, that the Ruler of the universe cares for him as an individual sufficiently to come into near and familiar relations with his everyday life—for it must be remembered that the idols worshipped by Hindus for the most part represent manifestations and incarnations of the Supreme Being.

In various parts of India, where the outcastes are seeking (generally as a result of improved economic conditions) to gain, or force, admittance into the wide fold of Hinduism, an interesting development is taking place, in the shape of an attempt on the part of these outcastes to establish their right to worship the images of Hindu gods. Much emphasis is laid upon stories of the gods themselves, whom the idols represent, coming down to earth and manifesting themselves to devout outcaste worshippers, on purpose to sanction their

adoring the idols in question. In the neighbourhood of Nagpur the Mahars, members of a very large outcaste community, entertain a great ambition to be regarded and treated, both socially and religiously, as Hindus. They express this desire by making and worshipping images of Ganpati, greatly to the disgust of their neighbours, the orthodox Hindus of higher caste. On several occasions the police have been compelled to interfere in order to prevent the Hindus doing injury to the Mahars and their images of Ganpati—nor have the Mahars been slow to retaliate in kind to the attacks that have been made on them.

The Sadhu.

Closely connected with the question of image-worship, and lying at the heart of popular Hinduism, is the position and character of priests and other holy men, especially the wandering ascetics or *Sadhus*. It is hard to find much good to say about the priests, and harder still to get an educated Hindu to say much that is good about them, especially about those who are in hereditary control of large temples, and are responsible for the management of the valuable estates and the disbursing of the great revenues attached to such temples. Of recent years a sinister series of revelations, especially from the Punjab, have demonstrated how shockingly corrupt the practices of these *mahants* often are. Similar revelations might probably be made at any time from all parts of the country.

The priests are frequently picturesque to look at, and interesting to talk to. They preserve an old-

world atmosphere. They maintain the practice of ancient ritual and (in some cases) the study of ancient literature. But in the main it is to be feared that they are fatally tempted to laziness and corruption.

The *Sadhus* also, though there are undoubtedly many good men and many earnest seekers after God amongst them, yet tend in the main to be parasites living in laziness upon the alms of the Hindu community, and especially of the poorer sections thereof. At any rate the average *Sadhu* is thus regarded by the poor people themselves; for it is common to find that, whilst they are regularly persuaded (somewhat grudgingly) to bestow upon him their gifts, yet behind his back they grumble loudly at his exactions and importunities, and are very ready to agree with anyone who points out the defects in such a life and practice.

At the same time, the ascetic ideal is so deeply rooted in the hearts of the Indian people that it is hard for them to regard as truly religious any man who has not renounced the world, and who does not live a life of self-denial and austerity. Hence the great influence exercised by Roman Catholic brotherhoods, and by the example of such men as Sadhu Sundar Singh within the Indian Christian Church.

The Doctrine of Karma.

Of the abstract ideas which underlie the complex system of Hinduism, and which exercise a deep and continuous influence upon the life of every Hindu, the most important is that of *Karma*, the

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belief that a man must be punished or rewarded in this life for his sins or good deeds in a previous existence, and that in a future existence he will be punished or rewarded for his sins or good deeds in this existence. This belief, of course, carried with it the necessity also of belief in the transmigration of souls—of the "wheel of existence," which goes on bringing a soul to birth after birth whether as animal, as outcaste or as Brahman. To obtain release from re-birth has been throughout the ages the chief aim of the profound searchings of the Indian religious genius.

The operation of *Karma* is regarded in practice as a fundamental natural law, to question the reality of which would be as foolish as to question the reality of the operation of the law of gravitation would have been in the days before Einstein. Disbelief in *Karma* is to the average Hindu almost unthinkable. His whole mental outlook is built on the self-evident truth (as it seems to him) that evil is inevitably punished, and good inevitably rewarded. This conception transfuses all his thinking. For instance, the writer recently set to the students in one of his classes the following exercise: he told them the story of a man who was the master of a great factory, and who put his son through all the toilsome, dirty and disagreeable processes of manufacture in that factory: the students were then asked to set down in writing their opinion of the reason why the boy was given that training. It was expected, of course, that they would say that the man was preparing his son for a position of authority later in life, and was giving him an inside

acquaintance with the various departments which he would some day have to control. It was remarkable, however, that the great majority of the students gave no such reply at all, but merely wrote that the boy was given this rough experience because of ill deeds done in a previous life, his father being the unconscious instrument of Eternal Justice in punishing the boy for those evil deeds. Many other instances might be given of the same phenomenon—the manner in which the conception of *Karma* influences in quite ordinary and practical ways the thinking and the attitude to life of the average Hindu. It is fundamentally true that the mind of India is saturated with the idea of *Karma*.

There is much that is lofty and admirable in this great conception. The belief in *Karma* creates a feeling of moral responsibility in the individual. It reminds men that behind the universe there is a moral law, obedience to which is of infinitely more importance to man's well-being and happiness than his material condition. It creates a great complex of ideas regarding conduct and character, which serve to maintain a standard of right action, and to check the evidences of the evil will.

But at the same time the belief in *Karma* results in much callousness in the treatment of misery and distress. "Who am I," a man will say, "that I should presume to interfere with the execution of the decrees of Eternal Justice, and try to relieve yonder poor wretch from his destiny, from the suffering which he has merited in a previous existence?" Even when relief is given, it is too often given not with an unselfish motive, but with the

desire to earn merit for oneself, that one's own destiny in the next life may be higher. Thus the roots of real generosity and self-sacrifice are cut away.

Furthermore, the conception of *Karma* tends to lead to a confusion of ideas regarding personality; for the being which survives into another existence cannot be regarded as a person identical, in any sense recognisable by psychology, with the being now alive. He lacks the same endowment from heredity and environment, the same mental and moral constitution, the same feelings and capacities, even the same memory. He is a distinct being, an entirely different personality; and yet a belief in *Karma* teaches that the two beings are the same.

However, when all criticism is made, the austere and noble grandeur of the belief in *Karma*, and the manner in which that belief has led to an agelong quest of the spirit of man for a way of release through knowledge of and devotion to God, must compel our admiration.

A word or two must be said regarding the belief in re-birth. This also is deeply imbedded in all Hindu thinking. Not long ago, for instance, some prisoners who had been condemned to death for a political murder were being taken off for execution. On the way they were interviewed by a journalist. One of them gave as his dying message, "Do not mourn for me. Remember that I shall return in nine months." It is obvious that where the conviction regarding re-birth is held with this degree of intensity, that conviction will very greatly modify a man's conduct, will lessen his dread of death, and

will tend also to reduce in him the power of the impulse to save others from death.

The Worship of Great Men.

Another great conception lying at the heart of Hinduism is that of the incarnation of the divine in great men. The orthodox suppose there to have been nine incarnations of Vishnu, but the list is not in practice limited to these nine; for there is a famous verse in the *Gita* declaring that, "Whenever there is decay of righteousness, and there is exaltation of unrighteousness, then I myself come forth; for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evildoers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness, I am born from age to age." These words are spoken by Krishna, who in the *Gita* is the incarnation of and the spokesman for the supreme Vishnu. They are closely coupled with another declaration, one of the master-texts of the school of religious thought and practice which relies upon *bhakti*—devotion to a personal deity—as its way of escape from the "wheel of existence":—"He who thus knoweth my divine birth and action, in its essence, having abandoned the body, cometh not to birth again, but cometh unto me."

On these twin sayings are based the highest achievements of the Hindu religious genius in its search after eternal truth; for they are the foundation-stones of the belief in incarnation and in salvation through devotion to a personal divine being. The two influences combined have brought it about that the people of India are extraordinarily ready to give their hearts' devotion to any great leader

who may arise amongst them. This is true not only in the religious sphere, but also in the social and the political spheres. Mr. Tilak, a very celebrated Nationalist politician, was frequently greeted with worship by his admirers; and Mr. Gandhi has been worshipped as an incarnation of Vishnu by millions upon millions, all over India. There are many lesser men also who, especially in times of distress or epidemic, have received the tokens of worship.

This tendency to give almost—or in some cases quite—divine honours to distinguished men is indicative on the one hand of the extraordinary responsiveness of the Indian nature, and on the other of the danger into which an inflammable population may be led by undue and transitory enthusiasm.[1]

The Pervasiveness of the Religious Spirit.

Mention must also be made of another great conception lying at the heart of Hinduism—the belief in the necessity for the crucifixion of desire. In a certain College class Tennyson's poem "St. Simeon Stylites" was recently being studied. An essay was set asking for a criticism of the character-drawing of the saint. In the essays which were sent in, student after student showed a remarkable capacity for psychological analysis (this is a striking characteristic of the Indian nature), and brought out the fact that the saint's austerities could not have

[1] Instances of sects and communities which actually worship living men as incarnations of the divine may be found in Dr. Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India.*

been genuinely pleasing to God because he was so obviously desiring heaven (on the one side) and the adoration of the crowds (on the other) for his own sake. His spirit was full of selfishness and pride, and therefore he could not have been a true saint.

Recently again an essay was set in a High School class on the subject, "What was the happiest day of your life?" One student wrote: "The happiest day of my life was the day on which I was born, because on that day only was I completely free from desire." Every Hindu student (and the vast mass of the common people also) is convinced of the wickedness of desire, and of the necessity for becoming completely free from this pre-eminent cause of suffering in future births. Hence there exists in India an underlying moral consciousness, an ethical outlook on the universe and on the varied problems of life, to which appeal may confidently be made in any particular case of difficulty that may arise.

It has already been remarked that spiritual ideas, or at any rate ideas which are other-worldly in their nature and appeal, have an extraordinarily wide influence in India. Not long ago some students came to a College lecturer and asked him for leave of absence from a lecture which he was about to give, on the ground that a certain noted *Sadhu* was that evening going to cause himself to vanish into air by the exercise of his spiritual power. It was believed that he had chosen this method of departing from the world in order to demonstrate the supremacy of the spiritual over the material uni-

verse; and the students naturally wished to see and assist at the demonstration. There was not the slightest doubt in their minds, though they were men who were reading Shakespeare, Milton and Macaulay, that the miracle could be and would be performed. It afterwards appeared that a large proportion of the population of the city had been gathered in an immense crowd around the *Sadhu's* place of abode. They were allowed to file slowly in and out of the house, passing before the platform on which the holy man was seated in contemplation. Needless to say, the miracle was not performed as expected: "the crowd had disturbed the saint's spiritual poise;" but the students were absolutely convinced that, if he had wished, and if conditions had been favourable, the *Sadhu* might have, and would have, caused himself to disappear in the way indicated.

On another occasion, at the town of Hoshangabad, which is situated on the banks of the Narbada, the whole place was electrified by the news that a *Sadhu* was going to perform the miracle of walking on the water of the holy river on a certain day and at a certain hour. When the time came, the offices and shops were deserted, and almost the whole population gathered on the river bank—and were disappointed in their hope of seeing the miracle.

These instances are quoted, not because they give a typical or a lofty idea of Indian spirituality, but because they show how ready and eager the population is, even the highly educated element in it, to give credit to the fact that the supernatural controls the world.

It is common to see elderly men, especially men of the educated classes, seated for long periods together out in the open air, perhaps in the fields or by the river-side, engaged in religious contemplation. One old friend of the writer's used every evening to take up his station for this purpose on the little concrete platform at the base of a signal-post beside the railway track. Such persons are, of course, anything but ashamed of being seen engaged in the exercise of their spiritual discipline. The idea of shame in this connection would no more occur to their minds than would the idea of undergoing such a discipline for the sake of making a show of piety before other men. The practice of their religion is to them merely the most natural and ordinary thing in the world.

Almost every conversation in India turns sooner or later to the subject of religion. The life of the people is governed by other-worldly considerations from long before birth till long after death.[1]

This spirituality of the Hindu mind makes the people, and perhaps especially the students, extraordinarily open to moral and religious influences. Reference was made in a previous chapter to the manner in which the country was impressed and for a time dominated by the conception of non-

[1] For a full treatment of this subject, reference should be made to Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson's *Rites of the Twice-Born*, a book whose several hundred pages are packed full of detailed descriptions regarding the religious ceremonies which must be performed by the orthodox Hindu. Such observances must not be scoffed at as merely mechanical ceremonial. They bear a very real and very deep spiritual meaning for untold multitudes of devout souls.

violence as enunciated by Mr. Gandhi in connection with the Non-Cooperation campaign. Although occasions occurred on which the rule of non-violence was broken (generally through the influence of Khilafat agitators, who were not, of course, Hindus), it would yet be highly unjust both to India and to Mr. Gandhi to deny that the most marvellous fact about the whole movement was this—that these occasions were so few, and that the vast mass of the Indian population, becoming all of a sudden intensely Nationalist in sentiment and intensely conscious of the evils which it believed the British Government to have inflicted upon it, yet behaved peacefully and in a spirit of non-resistance to evil. In this respect the success of Mr. Gandhi's appeal to the principle of non-violence constitutes something altogether novel in the experience of humanity. We may blame him for a lack of practical statesmanship in arousing amongst so ignorant and numerous a population such strong national feeling, and yet believing that the agitation thus initiated could be confined within constitutional limits; but at the same time we must acknowledge that the policy which he adopted and the ideals which he enunciated came so near to success as to constitute little short of a miracle. The new, non-violent ethical nationalism which Mr. Gandhi preached was all but realised in India in 1921; and the failure of the attempt, in the tragedies of Malegaon, Malabar and Chauri Chaura, cannot fairly be laid at the doors of Hindus.

This responsiveness on the part of Hindus to moral appeal is to be seen very frequently exempli-

fied in the course of ordinary educational work. The teacher has only, in a spirit of reasonableness and sympathy, to point out the rights and wrongs of any disputed case to an Indian student, and he will immediately respond to the appeal. His mind is also remarkably open to a more definitely religious appeal, especially to one which places before him in as vivid a colouring as possible some great and beautiful religious personality; for India has throughout her history shown herself eager to give her deepest adoration to any figure which by humility and unselfish service, by moral dignity and spiritual authority, has appealed to her inborn knowledge of true spirituality.

A study of Indian history, as it is usually written, is apt to prove disappointing to the Western reader. He finds himself in a new world, a world of primitive and often bloody personal absolutism. He can discern (till he comes to the impact of Western nations upon India) no trace of those familiar landmarks which are wont to mark for him in his study of Western history the various stages of human progress. There appears to be no political development, no constitutional advance, no emerging of more and more complex systems of governmental organisation—feudalism superseding primitive tribalism, centralised monarchy superseding feudalism, parliamentary democracy superseding centralised monarchy. The political history of India seems to be static where Western history is dynamic. It lacks movement. It has no signs of a creative activity. It seems to show even a progressive degeneration and decay; for was not the old semi-

republican polity of the early Aryan invaders a better thing than the corrupt and totally inefficient despotism of the eighteenth century, when the Moghal empire was falling into ruin? A closer analysis will show the student that the divergence between Western and Indian history goes deeper still. In India there has been scarcely any interest shown in political issues. The people have been content to let their rulers govern them without much concern as to the manner of that government. Only in the case of intolerable extortion or of bigoted persecution directed against the Hindu religion have revolts broken out; and these revolts, if successful, have merely replaced one absolutism with another.

Such criticisms are largely justified; but the reason for the absence of the political sense, and hence of political progress, in Indian history is not hard to find. The genius of the people has regarded political relationships as of little importance, but social, moral and religious relationshps as of tremendous importance. The achievement of India has lain, not in the domain of constitutional experiment and advance, but in the development of a vast system of social organisation—the caste-system. It has lain, secondly, in the development of a type of life founded on the belief that moral issues underlie the whole universe, and decide the destiny of every human soul born into the world. It has lain, thirdly, in a continuously developing insight into the things of the spirit—into the relations of God with man.

Now it is undoubtedly true that this line o

development is entirely different from that of the West. It is much less "successful" also, when judged by the standards of material well-being, and above all of material power. But the true mind of India has throughout the ages deliberately rejected such standards as worse than useless. And after the experiences of a great war, which all but tore Western civilisation to pieces in a hideous suicidal welter, perhaps it behoves the West to be less critical and contemptuous of the standards and the achievements of India, which in many ways approach much more nearly than those of Europe to the original teachings of the Christianity which the West professes.

CHAPTER IV

ISLAM

IT is hard to define Islam, just as it is hard to define Hinduism, but for a different reason. We can examine and appraise the faith and practice of Mohammedans. We can draw a hard-and-fast line between what is and what is not of their religion. But when we have done so, we are faced with a lack of the right categories of speech and thought in which to sum up the nature and meaning of what we have been studying. Islam is a religion; but it is obviously much more than a religion, for it is a tremendous political force in the world. Islam is a social system; but it is obviously much more than a social system, for it constitutes a vast inter-racial and inter-national brotherhood of believers. Islam is something unique, something which exists nowhere else except within the Islamic fellowship itself. It is something, therefore, which is hard to define and express in terms intelligible to those who have never come into contact with it at first hand. But it is a force, a faith, a system, a fellowship, which must emphatically be recognised, studied and reckoned with in the modern world.

It is perhaps needful to remark how essential it is that, in approaching the study of any alien system of thought and faith, the student shall resolve that

he will be perfectly just to it—that he will not allow himself through any form of prejudice to be blind to its good points, or to over-emphasise its bad points. The old attitude—the attempt to discover the weak points in an opponent's armour—is not only inexcusable but disastrous under modern conditions. It leads directly to the defeat of its own object, if that object be the superseding of what is felt to be primitive and untrue, or merely half-true, by what is felt to be true; for it constitutes a wrong psychological approach to the effort to convince—an approach which merely results in stimulating the defence of what would otherwise probably not be thought worth defending. The more strongly a man holds his own view of truth, the more essential it is that he should recognise the aspects of truth which are embodied in systems other than his own. The more earnestly he desires and strives to bring about reconciliation, and to abolish hatred and strife between race and race or community and community, the more necessary is it that he should follow the method of recognising and appealing to the best in those with whom he deals. Where the old polemical method led to the hardening of opposition, to the deepening of antagonism, and to the reinforcing of what is inferior and outworn, the new method of approach—the method of sympathy and appreciation—has led almost automatically, throughout the East, to the silent sloughing off of falsehood, and to a spontaneous readiness to receive and act upon new and higher ideals. Where this method is followed, it is possible, as it never was under the old method, to state the truth plainly and

fearlessly, but in a manner which will command respectful attention and receptivity.

The Islamic Belief in God.

The first phenomenon which strikes a Westerner in dealing with Musalmans is their simple and unquestioning confidence in the being and power of God. At the heart of all their faith and religious practice is a vivid realisation of the divine reality and majesty. Their idea of God is, of course, not our own. It is a conception very far removed from the conceptions of Christianity; but no Musalman worthy of the name has really hesitated in his faith in God, since the day when Muhammad, being closely pursued by his enemies on his flight from Mecca to Medina, comforted his sole companion, Abu Bakr, with the words: "Nay, say not that we are but two against many; for there is a Third with us." In the modern world of shifting doubt and indecision it is something—it is a very great deal—to know that one is dealing with folk who are stalwartly and unalterably convinced of the being and power of God, and who regard themselves, whether they come from Tangier or from Manila, as the servants and subjects of one eternal, almighty and all-seeing Potentate.

The Islamic Brotherhood.

In the second place, reference must be made in any consideration of Islam, however cursory, to its extraordinary spirit of unity and fraternity. It is this spirit, shown in the power of Islam to transcend all barriers, of race, colour, class or nationality,

which makes that faith the extraordinary phenomenon which it is. The Islamic brotherhood forms a bond far more powerful to those who are included within it than any national or racial bond. Loyalty to Islam means for them far more than any patriotism. They regard the "House of Islam" as one great community, differing indeed in speech and race, but indissolubly united in an allegiance to Islam itself which far transcends all other forms of allegiance. They recognise no caste and no class divisions; for all the followers of Islam are brethren, and in the mosque the emperor worships by the side of the beggar. It is true that within the past few years the policy of the new Turkey has tended to become narrowly national instead of Islamic; but such a phenomenon simply means that, in so far as this policy remains in force, Turkey automatically drops out of the true Islamic polity. Any community, however richly endowed with Islamic prestige from the past, which should place sectional interests above the interests of the "House of Islam" as a whole, would *ipso facto* be proved unworthy of its birthright of membership in the Islamic fraternity.

This spirit of brotherhood constitutes, of course, a unique phenomenon in the midst of a world rent asunder by all manner of divisions. It means that there are forces latent in Islam such as are not to be found in other organised systems of religious and social relationship. It means, as has already been said, that Islam is more than a religion (in the usual sense), and more than a social system. It is a unique religious-social-political brotherhood,

founded on no external authority, but real and potent beyond other forms of union which now are to be found on the earth.

Islam and India.

The problems created in India by the existence of this supernational Islamic brotherhood are many and various, especially those connected with the growth of the new Indian nationhood. How, for instance, are the Musalmans to become zealous Indian patriots when they are perpetually conscious that their loyalty to India is a very minor thing when compared with their loyalty to universal Islam? How far is the national party—the Hindu section of it—to go in seeking to conciliate and absorb a strongly self-conscious community of stalwart men, sixty millions strong, whose real allegiance is not to India at all, but to the "House of Islam," to a shadowy alliance of Islamic states, which may at any time become an actual and vigorous reality, and which, if it did so become, would in all probability desire to dominate India? How far will it be right and wise, in view of these things, to allow to Islam an extra-territorial position in the new Indian polity? [1] How far, on the other

[1] The proposal was recently made in all seriousness to a Royal Commission by one of the most prominent Musalman scholars in India, that in future adjustments of the franchise the principle should be adopted that in provinces where Musalmans are in the majority there should be no communal representation for Hindus, whilst in provinces where Hindus are in a majority there should be communal representation for Musalmans. As was pointed out at the time, the adoption of such a principle would mean "Heads I win, tails you

hand, can the devout Musalman go in placing himself under a form of Indian self-government in which, however privileged the position accorded to him, he is bound to be perpetually in a minority, and therefore to remain perpetually in the invidious (and indeed to his mind impious) position of being governed by unbelievers? How far can he allow his enthusiasm for vigorous Musalman powers outside India to affect his conduct as a citizen of a new self-governing India?

These are but a few of the exceedingly thorny problems which arise in India out of the very nature of the Islamic brotherhood. That they are not merely academic points was proved even in the palmy days of Hindu-Musalman unity and at the height of the Non-Cooperation campaign, when a sudden chill came over the movement as the result of a few rash words uttered by a prominent Musalman leader, regarding an invitation to the Ameer of Afghanistan to assist in the Indian national uprising. The difficulties in question have bulked far more largely during the past few years owing to the increasing friction and conflict between Hindus and Musalmans.

Many advanced Nationalists may be found in India to-day who sincerely doubt whether the Musalmans can ever be assimilated to the type of national life for India after which the Hindus aspire. Some will say that the concessions already made are far too large; that the influence of the advanced

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lose" for the Musalmans all along the line. No more definite and privileged position of extra-territoriality could be imagined in a modern democratic state.

Islamic party is already unduly strong in the counsels of Indian nationalism; that the tendency of Indian Musalmans to look to Kabul or Angora already threatens serious trouble. This problem of Hindu-Musalman relationships is absolutely fundamental to the future well-being of India, and to the possibility or otherwise of her attaining true unity and independence. After his release from jail, early in 1924, Mr. Gandhi was undoubtedly right in turning all his energies, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, to the task of improving the relationships between the two great communities—relationships which had become steadily more strained during the two years of his incarceration.

It is very hard for any European to express sound and unprejudiced opinions on these urgent problems of the new India. It is perhaps best that Europeans should for the present refrain as far as possible from expressing any opinions at all about them. Their solution must be sought for and found by the people of India themselves, who rightly resent any interference from the West.

It is needful, however, to regard with a good deal of sympathy the position of the average Indian Musalman. He belongs to a system which he knows instinctively to be a vastly bigger thing than any nationalism—he knows this is the way in which Christians should know (but in the main do not) that Christianity is a bigger thing than any national patriotism. He believes that Islam should be free from the control of unbelievers; and therefore he stands for the liberation of India from British rule. But that once achieved, what is he to do next?

It is unthinkable to him that Islam in India should be permanently subject to the control of a Hindu majority—that would be worse than subjection to the British; for it is still only a few generations since Islam ruled India and did what it would with the Hindus. How can he be a good Indian Nationalist in the usual sense? How can he help dreaming of a day when Islam shall be genuinely self-governing, even in India, where the Musalmans are in a hopeless minority? And how can that day ever come without some revolution in political conditions, or some interference on the part of Islamic Powers from outside, which shall be destructive of Indian freedom as a whole?

These considerations were driven home upon the mind of the Indian Musalmans by the Peace of Lausanne, where "Angora won an incredible victory over the Western Powers." As an Indian-edited paper put it: "Kemal Pasha has beaten the Allies in the game of international politics with their own weapons. This, coupled with the experience of Japan, ought to convey a lesson to all Oriental nations, and not least to us in India."[1]

[1] Compare the following extract from an English weekly:—"The Turks have now, after six months of chaffering, wrangling, bluffing, threatening and persisting, got from their exhausted adversaries a Treaty such as the most sanguine Die-hard amongst them could hardly have dreamed of a couple of years ago. . . . They have thrown off the yoke of the Western Powers, and taken away the privileges enjoyed for centuries by foreigners under the capitulations. . . They have restored themselves as a military power . . . and finally their bayonets have gained them a cordial invitation to join the League of Nations."

In brief, the effect of the Peace of Lausanne was to impress upon Indian Musalmans that the West had once more been challenged and defeated by the unaided power of an Oriental people, in this case a small and backward but an Islamic people. The result of this belief was the development of wider ambitions and a more assertive spirit on the part of the Indian Musalmans.

In the main it must be recognised that two men struggle for the mastery in the average Indian Musalman, the man of India and the man of Islam. Because the bond of Islam is far stronger than any bond of race or nationality, the man of Islam usually wins in the struggle, to the detriment, from many points of view, of the cause of a free and united India.

In a sense the average Indian Musalman is a man born out of due time, an anachronism in this modern world of fierce contending nationalisms. He is a man of the ancient universalism, a man perhaps of the coming universalism; but a man out of place, puzzled, astray, in this age of nations. No wonder, then, that his presence in a new half-formed national life creates peculiar and dangerous problems. He claims our sympathy and our understanding; and especially our respect.

Pan-Turanianism.

But there are many Indian Musalmans who are not of the general type outlined above, who do not feel themselves, half-unconsciously, to be men of another age, belonging to a universal brotherhood, owning allegiance to one spiritual fellowship tran-

scending all modern barriers, ruled by one holy law, which is the same all the world over, and which transcends all man-made legal systems, whether in Nigeria or in China. There are many Musalmans who have drunk deep of the new wine of nationalism, and who have come in consequence to conceive of the "House of Islam" much as the patriot conceives of his country. These men "think imperially" in terms of an Islamic world-dominance. The Islamic brotherhood is for them not so much a spiritual bond as a potential Empire. Their chief demand is for a Messiah-state, armed and triumphant, which shall give this Islamic Empire concrete being, and weld it into an irresistible military force, so that Islam may attain what is regarded as its due position of majesty and power in the world.

The men who think thus, naturally look to Turkey as the Messiah-state of their dreams. Their ambitions being political rather than religious, they find it easy to overlook or to explain away the offences committed by the Turks of recent years against traditional Islamic religion. They welcome, indeed, the modern narrow-spirited Turkish nationalism, which seems to care nothing for the Islamic brotherhood, and hence in reality to place Turkey outside the "House of Islam" altogether. They look to Turkey, rejuvenated as she has lately become, as the spear-head, the nucleus and the rallying-point of the new Islamic imperialism, whose triumphs they desire. Hence they may be called the Pan-Turanians; for where orthodox Islam thinks in the terms of a universal spiritual and social brotherhood, a theocracy ruled by God and

the Holy Law, they think in the terms of a reconstituted and vastly increased Turkish Empire, or at least in the terms of a confederation of Islamic states under the ægis of the new Turkey.

The importance of this Pan-Turanian party in India is probably much greater than their actual numbers. They have amongst them a group of celebrated popular leaders, who are skilled in the arts of propaganda and agitation. Recent events have shown that there are forces at work beneath the surface which may sooner or later make clear the radical divergence of aim between the Pan-Turanians in the first place, the followers of traditional Islam in the second place, and the Hindu nationalists in the third place.

When once the situation is clearly understood, and the issues defined, it is profoundly to be hoped by all well-wishers of India that some solution may speedily be found for a problem so fraught with danger as that of Pan-Turanianism in India. But, whether the problem is to be solved or not, one thing is certain—that it must be solved by India for herself. European interference can only make matters worse.

The Shadow of the Crusades.

In all relationships between the West and Islam it is desirable for the European to bear in mind that the average Musalman still thinks of Christianity and of Christians largely in terms of the Crusades. We represent to him an imperialistic religion, conquering by the sword, and fanatically opposed to his own religion. Mr. Lloyd George's ill-advised

support of Greece in the years after 1919 was understood by Indian Musalmans as a continuation of the aggression of, for instance, Richard Cœur de Lion. And a generation ago Mr. Gladstone's fierce denunciations of Turkish atrocities were taken to be inspired by the same ancient spirit of crusading bitterness. The impression still remains upon the mind of Islam of how, at the storming of Jerusalem in 1099, the Crusaders, after wading through the blood of seventy thousand massacred Musalmans, "came rejoicing, nay for exceeding joy weeping, to the tomb of our Saviour to adore and give thanks." The spirit of the Crusades still darkens and perplexes relationships between Musalman and Christian; and the Musalman is slow to realise that Christianity is no longer as it was in the days of Godfrey de Bouillon.

It is, of course, equally true that Christians are apt to conceive of Islam in much the same way, as a conquering imperial religion, propagated by the sword, and still governed by the ethics which marked the extraordinary Musalman triumphs of the seventh century. It seems almost impossible for either Christian or Musalman to rise above this ancient and evil realm of ideas. Each believes all evil and no good of the other; and where the adherents of the two faiths meet on an equality, as in the Near East, the spirit and practice of the Crusades still endure, massacre being answered by massacre, and deportation by deportation.

In India, where Christianity is nominally the religion of the dominant political Power, the prevailing bitter distrust of the Musalmans towards

the British Government, and their readiness at times (for instance, in the Moplah uprising) to break out into open rebellion, are factors due quite as much to religious as to political considerations. In dealing with Musalmans it must never be forgotten that religion and politics are to their minds indistinguishable. Religion covers the whole of life, and all relationships, including political relationships. Hence a Musalman is in a sense a traitor to his faith if he acquiesces in a condition of affairs involving permanent political subjection to unbelievers. At the same time he resents as an insult to his faith any interference by unbelievers with the sacred lands or institutions of Islam.

Reform within Islam.

Not long since a Musalman bookseller came to the writer to persuade him to purchase a copy of an English translation of the Quran, which had been produced by a progressive Muhammadan sect in North India. An examination of the book showed that various passages of a low ethical tone had been bowdlerised, whilst other matter inconsistent with modern conceptions had been explained away, or spiritualised and allegorised. This is indicative of the fact that enlightened Musalmans are at present engaged, perhaps almost unconsciously, in a great and exceedingly important movement of reform within their own faith, by which its views of religious truth and of practical morality shall be brought into accord with what is recognised as right by progressive public opinion in the twentieth century. Articles are continually appearing in

Indian periodicals, written by educated Musalmans, to correct the commonly-held views of the teachings which are given by Islam regarding, for instance, polygamy, the position of women, and the nature of the delights to be anticipated by believers in Paradise.

This movement of internal reform is full of the highest hope for the future.

In concluding this brief notice of Islam, it is needful to repeat once more that the one thing above all others needful for the solution of the many difficult problems which are presented by the position of the Musalmans in India, is a new spirit of conciliation, of brotherliness, of willingness to see the good and truth in other people's systems. It is for Christians to set the example in this, because in India we belong to the dominant element, and because we profess to be the adherents of a religion of love.

CHAPTER V

THE BRITISH SYSTEM

Its Benefits.

ANYONE who visits India, even for a brief period, if he move about at all amongst educated Indians, is bound to be faced almost at once with the fact that there are great numbers of people in that country who believe with their whole hearts that they are misgoverned. Since the launching of Mr. Gandhi's Non-Cooperation campaign in 1920, this opinion has spread outwards and downwards through the country villages and amongst the great mass of the population, until now in almost any village, however remote, and even amongst the labouring classes of the community, one may come across the opinion freely expressed that certain features of government, for instance, the land-tax and the salt-tax, are oppressive. Such talk is frequently ill-informed and ill-willed; yet it stands for something very real and very big—the advance into self-conscious nationhood of a great people, and their realisation that, come what may, "self-government is better than good government." It is not long before an impartial observer of these things finds himself frequently and forcibly reminded of the words of Abraham Lincoln, "God never yet made one people good enough to govern another people."

Yet, although this is so, it is at the same time an undoubted fact that the British system has conferred immense and incalculable benefits upon India. It is even true that the new national feeling has had opportunity of development solely because of the British system, with its provision of English education and of the means of communication, and that the coming self-governing India will of necessity be founded and built up on the achievements of the faithful and unostentatious work which has been carried on through the period of British control.

The first and greatest of the benefits conferred by the British has been peace. The history of India, from the break-up of the Moghal Empire (which may be dated from the death of Aurangzeb, in A.D. 1707), is one long catalogue of anarchy, with British rule slowly emerging as the single stabilising factor. It is true that certain strong states, such as the Maratha Principalities and the Sikh Confederacy, kept their heads above water for a time, and even prospered amidst the surrounding ruin; but such states never endured for long; whilst in their strength, and still more in their decay, they were a perpetual menace to the rest of India. It was a period of intrigue, treachery, violence and selfishness on a colossal scale; and the records thereof make gloomy and unedifying matter for historical study. In many districts of the Central Provinces the memories still endure of the worst and final phase of this period of anarchy, before the British Government stepped in and, by suppressing the lawless freebooters who everywhere terrorised

the country-side, established at last peace and order. The people will tell you still how in those days, now more than a century since, it would be a common thing, on news being brought to some village that a party of Pindaris were approaching, for the men to flee to the forests, and, if no other way of escape offered itself, for the women to jump down the wells rather than have their hands hacked off for the sake of their jewellery—or worse. In a large proportion of the villages in certain districts the rough forts still exist which were built in a desperate attempt to provide means of protection and defence.

The Pindaris who have just been named spread havoc and massacre far and wide across India from Rajputana to the east coast. They were a conglomeration of robber-bands, composed of disbanded or unpaid soldiery from the Maratha states and from other principalities. They committed frightful atrocities. But worse even than the Pindaris were the Thugs, fanatics who believed themselves to be pleasing the goddess whom they worshipped by lying in wait for, plundering and strangling travellers. They formed a highly organised fraternity of assassins and desperadoes. For long they completely terrorised northern and central India, and the number of their victims was immense. They flourished practically unchecked until the British Government again stepped in, took the matter in hand, and stamped them out—a lengthy and exceedingly difficult business.

These are only two out of many concrete instances which might be given of the magnificent work of

peace-making, work in the highest degree beneficent and humanitarian, which was accomplished by the British System in its early days. Peace once established, the law was codified by the brilliant genius of Macaulay; and from that day to this the careful elaboration of the System has gone steadily forward, the machinery being constantly overhauled and readjusted, with a view to increased efficiency in the fulfilment of the task of preserving peace and improving the condition of the vast populations involved. One of the latest triumphs of this immense and impressive process has been the elaboration of an extraordinarily comprehensive and effective Famine Code.

The peace-giving work of Government has been in the main markedly successful; and a generation has grown up knowing nothing of the ancient anarchy and violence, and wont to regard with sceptical indifference as "Government propaganda" any attempt to remind India of her grim past.

One has only to look to contemporary China (where whole cities or even provinces are held to ransom by buccaneering generals, backed by an ill-disciplined soldiery, and where a rich man may have his child kidnapped by brigands one day and the next receive a severed finger or an ear, with the intimation that more will follow if an exorbitant ransom is not paid immediately) in order to understand how immense has been the service to humanity performed by the British Government in establishing and maintaining peace in India. There can be very little doubt that if the British were to be totally and immediately removed, India would in a

short time—perhaps in a very short time—lapse back into the condition in which she was one hundred and fifty years ago. She would indeed be in a worse case than China, for her people are less homogeneous, and many sections of them are without that tradition of peacefulness and submission which marks the orthodox Hindu as well as the bulk of the Chinese population. All talk of the immediate withdrawal of the British shows a fatal tendency to disregard the lessons of history—the history of the eighteenth century in India and that of the twentieth century in China.

A young Englishman of advanced views recently said to the present writer, "Don't you think we ought to clear out of India altogether, and let them tear themselves to pieces if they want to? Are we bound always to go on trying to stop them fighting?" In answer to such a question it is needful in the first place to point out that we are committed by no choice of our own (at any rate in the present generation) to our vast peace-making and peace-maintaining responsibilities; and that if we throw up those responsibilities without consideration, we shall as a race be responsible also, in the sight of God and man, for the sufferings that will ensue. In the second place, it must be remembered that when anarchy overtakes any nation or people, it is not so much the distinguished individual citizens or the articulate classes that suffer; the chief sufferers are the peasants, the poor, and above all the weak, the women and children; these are the elements in the population which are plundered and slaughtered, and which starve.

But whilst thinking men must believe that the British are still vitally needed for the defence of India from anarchy, and for the maintenance of peace and order, it is also becoming increasingly clear that a position has been reached at which the only hope of progress lies in freedom—in the speedy and generous concession of the widest possible measure of self-government. The sphere of British control, and the function of the British element in the government, must be limited throughout India (just as that sphere and function have for a hundred years been limited in the two-fifths of India formed by the Indian states) to this one task and this alone—the maintenance of peace and order. The Nizam of Haidarabad, or any other Indian potentate, may under existing conditions call upon the British to help him in suppressing anarchy or repelling attack, by means of their forces stationed in his territories. The same arrangement must be made to apply to the whole of India, the British defenders of law and order being placed at the service of a genuinely Indian government, as at present in the Indian states. In time, it is to be hoped, this Indian Government—the Federal Government, as it may become, of the United States of India—will be genuinely democratic, in the sense at least that it will be so constituted as to represent the desires of an enlightened Indian public opinion.

It is customary for history books to enumerate many material benefits which British rule has brought to India, such as railways, telegraphs, an exceedingly efficient postal system, and so forth. However, in India to-day it is the fashion to look

askance upon this sort of material advantage, as the outward and visible sign of a materialised and dominant Western civilisation. Even hospitals and medical services are, at least in advanced quarters and amongst the followers of Mr. Gandhi, looked upon with suspicion, partly because it is believed that they have tended to discourage the ancient indigenous systems of medicine. There are also many Indians, even well-educated men, who believe, illogically enough, that famine has been brought to India by the British connection, just as the bringing of plague from China at the end of the last century was rendered easy by modern trade and modern sea communications.

Extravagant opinions such as these should probably be regarded merely as an automatic reaction against alien control, and as an inevitable phase in the development of self-conscious nationhood. But, whilst this is so, few will assert, on the other hand, that any merely material benefits can justfy the permanent subjection of one people to another. Moreover, there is always the possibility that a healthy dissatisfaction with Western civilisation as it is, and a refusal to be dazzled by its material appurtenances, may lead to the development of some new Oriental type of more truly civilised life, which shall avoid the tragic mistakes of the West, and so be of benefit to all mankind.

Famine Relief.

Before passing on from the consideration of the material benefits brought to India by British rule, it is needful to say something more concerning two

especially noteworthy lines of governmental activity, whose solid usefulness and value the most advanced Nationalist could scarcely impugn.

In the first place, the development of scientific methods of irrigation has transformed thousands of square miles of arid desert into fertile land, and has thus directly contributed to the creation of happy populations settled in comfort upon districts where no life was possible before.

In the second place, the development, briefly mentioned above, of the Famine Code, and its elaboration to an extraordinary degree of practical perfection, has already resulted in the saving of many millions of lives from starvation. The present writer, when serving as a voluntary Famine Charge Officer, has had the opportunity of observing the organisation and working of the famine relief system in a very backward and remote region. It was a district of hills and jungles, without proper roads and far away from the centres of administration—as hard a district as any in India in which to apply the Famine Code successfully. The population consisted for the most part of primitive aborigines—many of them as yet imperfectly advanced from the "food-gathering" to the "food-producing" stage of culture, and very shy and suspicious. Yet so far as could be observed in the course of work which involved tramping from village to village through the jungles, and certainly showed the worst which there was to be seen, not a single life was likely to be lost through starvation in that whole region.

Such an achievement means an astonishing

triumph of administrative genius, working under the greatest difficulties, in a sphere where none can question its benevolence, and where none can regard it as trenching upon legitimate freedom. From twenty to thirty years ago there occurred in the Central Provinces a succession of frightful famines, in the course of which millions of lives were lost. It was obvious that the system of famine relief then in vogue was inadequate and inefficient; and hence the present Famine Code was laboriously evolved. It aims at prevention rather than at relief of destitution; and "by catching the famine young," nearly always succeeds in localising it, and in rendering it more or less completely innocuous so far as deaths through starvation are concerned. By careful observation of the rise of food prices; by an elaborate organisation beforehand of supplies of grain (perhaps brought from the other end of India); by the arrangement of transport for the same, whether by railway, by road, or—through the employment of many thousands of pack-bullocks—by mountain track; by the establishment and stocking of food depots up and down the affected district; by starting relief works of a permanently useful character (*i.e.* the construction of roads and tanks); by the establishment of famine camps, under careful sanitary direction, near to these relief works; by the distribution of gratuitous relief to those physically unfit for work; by the setting-up of an elaborate system of payment and supervision—by these and other methods, all involving the most careful organisation, and a lavish expenditure of public

money, famines now can be, and actually are, fought and conquered.

It is perhaps impossible for those who have not themselves taken a share in the colossal task of fighting a famine to realise how immense an achievement of practical genius the development and application of this Famine Code represents, especially in a difficult country and amongst primitive tribes.

In the case of which mention has been made the whole immediate responsibility for the administration of the Famine Code, over a district of five thousand square miles, with a scattered population of some three hundred thousand, devolved upon the District Officer, a young Indian Civil servant. It would be hard to exaggerate the crushing burden which such a responsibility involves, and the incessant, nerve-racking labour which it necessitates. Indeed the centre and pivot of the whole British system in India is the District Officer. Unlike (too often) his superiors at Headquarters, he lives in close contact with the people almost the whole of his time. He is out amongst them in the villages for many months of the year. They are constantly coming to him for help and advice. His work is exceedingly hard; and much of it is monotonous, uninteresting and thankless; but it is work of the very highest value for the good of the people amongst whom he lives, not only in times of famine or other calamity, but in the ordinary course of administration.

In the work of the District Officer the British System shows at its best. Here it is an efficient,

benevolent public service, in touch with the opinion and needs of the people.

Its Weaknesses: Over-centralisation.

Conversely, the weakness of the British System shows in the big administrative Headquarters, where there are so many Europeans that they form a self-sufficing community finding the centre and expression of its communal life in a European club, from which Indians are too often in practice excluded. At such Headquarters the officials tend almost inevitably to drift away from contact with the people and the country, and to become (odious term) Bureaucrats, tied to their offices and their files, and querulously out of contact with the realities of life. The result is a dangerous tendency to over-centralisation, with all the extinction of local initiative and the lack of touch with the real feelings and opinions of the people which that heavy word connotes. The result is also slavery to a system, a system good perhaps in itself, and yet bad in practice, because it is rigorously enforced by an efficient but soulless machine. At its best all that such a system can give is Paternalism, a benevolent but autocratic control, which may be well suited to the child-races of the jungle (especially when administered through a Forest Officer or a Deputy Commissioner who is in personal contact with the people), but which is galling and infuriating beyond words to a proud and sensitive *intelligentsia* demanding the right to rule in its own house.

At its worst such a system may degenerate rapidly towards a reactionary tyranny, enforced by

military "frightfulness," as has happened in almost every case in history where one people has used the machinery of an alien bureaucracy to rule another people.

The traditional method of government in India is that of personal autocracy—a system under which everything depends upon the character and will of an individual, whether that individual be the central autocrat or his local lieutenants. The vices of such a method of government are glaringly apparent to Western eyes; and its advantages may appear negligible. Yet the strong tradition of personal autocracy renders peculiarly obvious and irritating the disadvantages and vices of an impersonal bureaucratic machine, which appears to the mind of modern India an unnatural and loathsome monster.

In the past there has been another dangerous weakness in the British System—it has offered no possibility for the emergence and development of an intelligent Opposition, able to criticise and adjust the workings of the governmental machine. It is hard to imagine what government would be like in England if one party were permanently in power and there were no responsible Opposition in the House of Commons to keep it on the right track. Yet this was in effect the condition of things in India up to the launching of the Reforms in 1920. Under the new conditions an Opposition (and in some cases a very powerful one) is developing in all the Provincial legislatures, as well as in the Central legislature at Delhi. This is, of course, a sign of the greatest hopefulness for the future, a sign that,

in spite of the wrecking tactics which have been adopted in some cases by the politically inexperienced, India is rapidly becoming trained for responsible government.

Over-centralisation, as has been mentioned, means a divorce between the Headquarters administration and the real state of feeling and opinion in the country as a whole.[1] This lack of sympathetic comprehension leads at times to mistakes which are so obvious and so tragic in their results as to amount to real political crimes. One such mistake, and a typical one, was the passing of the Rowlatt Act, in the teeth of the unanimous protests of the people of India, just at a time when the country was confidently expecting some generous measure of conciliation in view of the services which she had performed on behalf of the British Empire during the Great War. A legislature closely in touch with the feelings of the people would have known instinctively that it was the wrong time to propose such an offensive measure, and furthermore would have withdrawn the measure, if passed, as soon as it was realised what a storm of opposition had been aroused, and how unanimous that opposition had become. However, the British System being what it was, and that accursed thing Prestige being worshipped as it is, the Government held it needful to force the obnoxious measure through, whence came Passive Resistance, Amritsar, and Non-Cooperation.

[1] Feeling is purposely put before opinion, because, in India as she is at present, feeling counts for much more than reasoned opinion, at any rate amongst the mass of the people.

Again, in 1923, the same absence of understanding regarding the real state of feeling in the country led to the forcing through of the increase in the Salt Tax, by an arbitrary exercise of the emergency powers of the Viceroy—an almost incredible mistake in view of the approaching elections, and of the fact that the highly unpopular increase of taxation in question would immediately be forced home upon the attention of the humblest voter in the country. Such a mistake meant that the freedom granted with one hand was being taken away with the other. It meant a denial of self-determination in that sphere—the sphere of the control of taxation—which has always proved the crux and touchstone of democratic aspirations. It could only have been committed by men not so much out of sympathy with popular feeling as ignorant of the existence and meaning of such a thing as popular feeling.

Another instance of the same failure may be found in the so-called "flag agitation" which was carried on in certain parts of India during 1923. The extremer Nationalists felt it laid upon them to carry the National flag through the Civil station of Nagpur—the part of the town where Europeans reside. The authorities forbade these flag-processions on the ground that they were likely to give offence to residents in the district concerned, and so to lead to disturbances. This formed, of course, a golden opportunity for the extremists, who were eager to find suitable occasions for disobeying Government orders on issues not involving moral turpitude. Volunteers thronged forward to

carry the flag through the Civil station in question. Hundreds were arrested. Hundreds more came to take their place, even from distant parts of India. The whole issue was contemptibly small; yet it raised a really dangerous degree of ill-feeling. It seemed clear enough to the onlooker that, given a little more contact with popular feeling on the part of Government, the whole affair might have been avoided. Flag-processions were allowed in the parts of Indian cities inhabited by Indians, and in the European part of Bombay (for instance). So long as no damage was done and no breach of the peace committed (and the flag-agitators declared their intention of preserving complete non-violence), it was hard for the people to see why they should not have been permitted to carry their flag through the Civil station of Nagpur also. Here again a closer touch between Government and popular feelings, coupled with a less diligent zeal for the preservation of Prestige, might have prevented the emergence of a question which aroused very considerable resentment and bitterness.

Control from Home.

Another point in regard to which the British System in India may legitimately be criticised is the degree of control which is exercised over the Government of India by authorities in England.

It was generally believed in India that the arrest of Mr. Gandhi was ordered from home, and also the increase in the Salt Tax. In these special cases the pressure from England may or may not have been a reality; but the fact remains that pressure is

frequently administered from Whitehall, and that its existence is therefore suspected by Indians in connection with measures (especially reactionary measures) where in reality it may not have occurred. Such suspicions are dangerous, and the cause of them must as far as possible be removed, because the conviction is growing more and more strong (and resentment more and more bitter as a result of the conviction) that England does not really care for India, and is not genuinely interested in her, except in so far as the maintenance of her own dominance is concerned.

No one who has observed the manner in which Indian problems are approached in England—when they are approached at all—can doubt that there is a solid basis for these complaints. That such a state of things should be possible is a heavy indictment against any imperial race. It makes, moreover, subjection to Britain far more galling than it might otherwise be to a people with the mental characteristics of the Indians.

Signs of Progress.

Yet it can scarcely be doubted that progress is steadily being made towards the longed-for day when Dyarchy, as established by the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, with its desperate problems of adjustment and its manifold opportunities for friction, shall no longer be needed, and when responsible self-government shall be a fact.

Wide areas of government are already under the control of Indian Ministers answerable to the Provincial Councils, and therefore ultimately to the

people. In many connections the rapid development may be observed of political sense and administrative skill amongst Indians. The new legislatures set up under the Reform Scheme are proving nurseries of constitutional experience. Important public business, which may directly involve the happiness of many millions, is constantly coming up for discussion in them; and such discussions are approached with an increasingly apparent sense of responsibility. There is noticeable also a readiness and an ability to "stand up to the bureaucrats" when occasion arises. They are no longer regarded with awe and reverence, as they sit aloof on their Olympian heights. They have been compelled to descend into the storm and turmoil of Parliamentary institutions and procedure. They have awkward questions to answer, and in some cases hostile majorities to bear up against. On the whole the "bureaucrats" have acquitted themselves well under exceedingly trying conditions. Except where progress has been delayed by the wrecking policy of a Swarajist majority,[1] a steady advance has taken place towards responsible government; and the two sides of the administration have been learning more and more effectively how to work loyally together.

Of course the old bureaucratic spirit breaks out

[1] The *Swaraj* party took the field in 1923, with the policy of entering the new Reformed Councils in order to render the process of government through these Councils impossible; this reactionary policy had succeeded by the end of 1924 in suspending the operation of the Reforms, and in thus delaying political progress, only in Bengal and the Central Provinces.

again from time to time, occasionally in a fashion which creates unpleasant situations. Plenty of instances of such situations, with caustic comments thereon, can be found in the columns of any Nationalist newspaper. There are abundance of difficulties also from the side of the new Ministers, and more from the Councils themselves. But all the while the inestimably important work of political education is going prosperously forward beneath the surface; and India is thereby becoming more and more prepared for self-government.

Whither tending?

The question is frequently asked with regard to the whole British System in India, and especially with regard to the new developments of that System under the Reforms, Whither is it tending? What is the purpose of it all? Are we trying to impose upon an Eastern environment a type of polity (viz. Parliamentary democracy founded on representative institutions) which is totally unfitted to that environment, and which has only been worked (and with very precarious success) for less than a century in our own country, even though there a process of political education had been preparing the ground for such a polity through at least six centuries?

There are many critics who answer this type of question with a bold assertion that all such efforts are foredoomed to failure—that the attempt to introduce Western democracy into India is a colossal blunder. Such critics do not only come from the ranks of the "sun-dried bureaucrats"; they are

also to be found in vociferous expostulation amongst the most stalwart Nationalists. For instance, in his Presidential address at the Indian National Congress in 1922, Mr. C. R. Das, who to some extent stepped into Mr. Gandhi's position of leadership after the latter's arrest, expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with the fundamental policy of the Reforms, and advocated the placing of far more emphasis upon the need for re-establishing the ancient indigenous system of self-government, through the multiplication of village-democracies, each as far as possible self-sufficing. This system of village self-government flourished for thousands of years, even in the midst of savage invasions and under the heel of foreign despotism; but it is now little in evidence, having been emasculated (as is alleged) by the scientific centralisation of the British Government. Under this ancient village system the affairs of the little commonwealth (the appointment and control of the village officials and servants, the adjustment of disputes, the assignment of lands, and so forth) are deliberated and passed upon by a *Panchayat* or council consisting generally of the heads of the chief families or communities inhabiting the village.

There are, also, a few bureaucratic admirers of the old régime who wish to bundle India back to it bag and baggage; who, in the well-known words, "Want to see men in India who can govern; and when I say govern, Sir, I mean shoot." Such stalwart reactionaries wish to see the whole machinery of Council government scrapped, and a return made to purely bureaucratic methods of administration, tempered when needful by the machine-

gun. But the number of these last-ditchers can be but small; and their influence is decreasing. No one who has the slightest acquaintance with conditions in modern India can in his wildest dreams for one moment believe that return is possible to the old system of paternalism. The only question to be answered is this—What is to be the pace of the advance towards complete self-government? [1]

[1] The following quotation from A. Carthill's *Lost Dominion* (a book representing in many respects the "Die-hard" attitude regarding British control) is of interest as illustrating, from the point of view of a candid friend of the old British System, the most glaring defects of that System:

> "The Secretariat became rapidly divorced from actuality A clever young man was taken up to the Olympian heights and passed for the whole of his service from one staff billet to another, never again returning to the inglorious, uncomfortable, unremunerative, yet vital District work From the Secretariat were chosen the Members of Council, and it was thus easy and common for a man to spend thirty-five years in India, and rise to supreme control of a great province, and yet know little more of India and the Indians than he would have known had he spent these years in Whitehall. The Simla body, as the supreme directorate and its staff may generically be called, was a small and select band, and, like all such coteries, was engaged in an endless internecine struggle for posts and decorations As usual in such communities, the petticoat played an important part, and the wearer of the petticoat was not always free from the imputation of irregular influence. In such an atmosphere no great policy can be conceived and produced. With difficulty, through the noise of the grinding of axes, can be heard the footfall of the approaching barbarian or the challenge of the sentinel."

Thus there is only one reply to be given to the query, Whither is the British System in India, refurbished by the Reforms, leading the country? It is leading towards self-government.

The particular form which self-governing institutions are to take in India must be settled not by us but by the Indians themselves. All that we can do is to render the transition period as brief and as frictionless as possible, and to see to it that in schools and colleges the future leaders of India—and the destined discoverers of the type of polity which shall best suit her needs—are rightly trained for the great work which lies ahead of them.

The one supreme necessity during the coming years, whilst the difficult process of transition is going forward, is that the British race in its dealings with India should show sympathy and generosity towards her aspirations after a fuller and more emancipated national life. At the earliest possible moment constitutional liberty should be conceded. The risk of serious mistakes being made by the new Councils, the risk even of a certain amount of disintegration as regards efficiency in administration, must not be considered in comparison with the certainty of bitterness, estrangement and gathering hatred if India is to feel that the British are resolved to thwart her ambitions, frustrate her demand for liberty, and treat her with niggardly, cheeseparing meanness, instead of with justice and generosity. It is extremely probable that India will sooner or later discover that the elaborate machinery through which we have governed her is in various ways unsuited to her needs as a new self-governing

nation. Then she will change it and simplify it. Perhaps she may evolve some totally new type of polity. But in either case the work must be done by herself and in her own way. The British people have the duty of helping to prepare her for this task, of securing for her permanent happiness within the British Empire, and of training her for the enjoyment of that self-government which, by the declared policy of the British Parliament, she is destined within a short period to attain. This duty they can best fulfil by exercising an imperial generosity towards her, and by making the period of transition as brief as possible. In the meantime, the work of education is seen to involve issues of ever wider and wider importance for the future.

So far this book has given a European's view of India, an external, though it is hoped a sympathetic view.

In the following chapters the attempt will be made to show what educated Indians are themselves feeling to-day about their country and her future.

PART II

THE INDIAN POINT OF VIEW

Chapter VI

HOW AN INDIAN LOOKS AT THE WEST

The Interdependence of India and England.

THE interdependence of India and England is not merely an affair of political relationship. Economically the two countries are essential to each other. England is India's best customer, and India England's. Immense sums of English money have been invested in India. The modern educated Indian is convinced that, as a result of this relationship, his country is exploited commercially, and is compelled to accept an alien system of industry, which is highly dangerous to her welfare.

These convictions may be right or wrong. They certainly exist. Before discussing their significance further, it is needful to consider another and even more important sphere of interdependence—the cultural.

The impact of Western, and especially of English, thought and ideals upon the ancient static civilisation of India has led to radical change in a large number of directions. Though the period during which this impact has been effective is little more than a century, a miraculous transformation has been effected in Indian religion, Indian social organisation, Indian thinking on all manner of topics. Gross superstitions and cruel abuses have been

swept away wholesale: barriers which seemed impassable have been broken down: a great revival of vernacular art and letters has been brought about: and a totally new educational system has been set up. As the final fruit of the whole process, Indian nationalism has come into existence, in itself the most decisive proof of the influence of the West upon the East; for nationalism as it exists in India to-day is a profoundly un-Indian thing.

Indian nationalism could never have developed without a common language and efficient means of communication between one part of the country and another. These things are essential to unity, and England gave them to India. Simultaneously she gave Western social and political ideals, equality, democracy, the rights of minorities. India eagerly embraced these ideals, and set to work to apply them on the one hand to the inequalities and injustices within her own body politic, and on the other hand to her own position *vis-à-vis* the English suzerainty. Nationalism being the extraordinarily potent ferment which it is, this latter class of problem has gradually come to occupy almost her whole attention.

At the end of the nineteenth century India was rapidly awakening. She had already, in Mr. Gokhale, a statesman of first-class ability, able to wield skilfully the political weapons ready to his hand, and to use them with excellent effect in a long constitutional struggle with the British for a wider measure of liberty.

India found herself faced, however, by antagonists still at heart convinced that " Orientals under-

stand nothing but force," and still controlled by the mentality of the dark Mutiny years, when frightfulness had been met by a fuller and more effective measure of frightfulness.

The Russo-Japanese war began to train India in the counter-idea that "Europeans understand nothing but force." She saw Japan admitted to the circle of first-class Powers, praised, courted, sought in alliance, because she had been able to defeat a great European state with its own weapons, in its own game of war. The effect upon the mind of India was immense.

Later came the Great War, in which India was called upon to make prodigious sacrifices in a cause which she never felt to be her own, because she was bound to the chariot wheels of England.

The Results of the Great War.

The influence of the Great War upon the thoughts of the average intelligent Indian was threefold. In the first place, he became convinced that Christianity as a system is a failure, because it did not prevent the war, and because during its course the Churches of the rival nations were praying to a God of Love for victory one against the other.

No one unacquainted by first-hand experience with the influence of religion upon the Indian mind can form any conception of the effect produced by the spectacle of this religious débacle—for such it was felt to be. Here was a system of thought and morals, which in many ways had seemed so good, reduced to a pathetic derision before gods and men by the first breath of battle.

As he saw Western religion declared bankrupt in this fashion, the Indian began to realise, as never before, that between himself and the West a great gulf was set. He began to covet for his country freedom in a new sense—total isolation from the infectious contact of Western systems, which were thus patently founded in falsehood and delusion.

In the second place, the Great War brought home to India the lesson already partially learnt from the Russo-Japanese War—the lesson that "Westerners understand nothing but force." She saw the destinies of the world decided by preponderance in military strength. She saw that, for the time being at least, she herself was valued by her suzerain simply and solely for the military assistance which she could give in the struggle. She found herself acclaimed and rewarded, a reformed method of government granted to her, because she had been useful in a military sense. She saw Japan actually numbered amongst the five major Powers because of her strength in war.

From that period dates a school of thought which is increasingly significant and powerful in India—a school which says: "We shall never be free from the West till we can fight, and fight successfully, against the West." The present writer has heard a leader of this school say to a student audience: "I wish to teach India to kill, to kill scientifically and efficiently." In a land whose immemorial teaching has been that of *Ahimsa* (harmlessness) this is a portent indeed. It is a type of thought which is growing in strength and significance daily, and which tends more and

more directly to look for inspiration and practical help to Moscow.

In the third place, the Great War inspired the more thoughtful type of Indian with a deep horror of the West. Here was a civilisation immensely strong in material resources, amazingly capable and efficient as regards the enforcement of its will, unquestionably dominant throughout the world, which was yet obviously pathological. It was infected by a suicide-mania. As soon as it reached a certain stage of maturity in its development, it turned its fangs against itself, devouring its own flesh in hideous contortions. Obviously also in destroying itself it could drag down in its train the whole non-Western world.

It is impossible to exaggerate the sense of horror with which the sensitive mind of India looked on at the phenomena of the War. It has been expressed thus by a well-informed English observer: "At the end of the War the Westerner had for the educated Indian hardly a shred of reputation left."

In those days the resolve was born, deep, burning and unquenchable, in the hearts of the most devoted sons of India, that come what might and at whatever sacrifice, their Motherland should be saved from this civilisation, which was in truth death.

The Demand for Severance.

Indian opinion was not slow in giving utterance to this aspiration for severance from the West, both through definite statements of policy and in a great national campaign for self-emancipation.

The essence of the Non-Cooperation movement,

which came to an extraordinary pitch of strength in the period 1920–22, was the resolve to break the fatal connection between India and the West, whose meaning—the chaining of the East to a world-process ending in wholesale suicide—had (it was felt) been fully and finally demonstrated in the War.

The greatest modern philosopher of India (every educated Indian is deeply interested in philosophy, and the philosopher is as much of a hero to him as the cricketer is to us) declared in round terms: "There are men in the West who spend sleepless nights in cursing God, because he has allowed these civilisers to get into their lands."

The most distinguished and level-headed of Indian publicists wrote as follows: "To thoughtful Indians the War seemed not an abnormal incident in contemporary history, but an apt climax of an acquisitive society that had accumulated enough wealth to be torn in conflict for its possession: a society, moreover, that made competition the basis of its social religion, and physical force the basis of all its settlements. Science, it seemed, has resulted in enhancing human suffering rather than in mitigating it. Newton and Watt and Darwin had ended in poison gas and tanks."

In these words expression is given to the conviction, which is general amongst thinking Indians, that the War was not merely a passing and abnormal convulsion on the surface of Western civilisation. It was the inevitable outcome of the fact that Western civilisation is psychologically wrongly-founded. From time immemorial India has believed that a man's or a community's psychology

matters everything. The destiny, both of individual and of nation, is determined by the question whether or no "desire" is admitted as a motive for action, whether or no self-hypnotism is practised by the entertaining of wrong motives, selfishness, greed, pride.

A civilisation acquisitive in its inmost nature, founded upon cut-throat competition, with greed as its fundamental motive, and force as its fundamental sanction, could (in accordance with the ancient teachings of Hinduism) *by no possibility end in anything else but wholesale destruction.* The War forced thinking India to the belief that Western civilisation was of such a nature. Therefore it became imperative to enlist every Indian worth calling a man in the struggle for independence from the West, for *Swaraj.*

The Ideal of "Dharma."

This struggle, it was seen, was far more than a merely political enterprise, though it comprised as its first objective the winning of political freedom. It was a strife of world-systems, a conflict of two entirely distinct world-minds. Moreover, it was a life-and-death struggle; for if the East did not win its right to develop its own system in its own way, that system would swiftly be submerged and destroyed by its antagonist, the world-system of the West.

The nature of this Western world-system is generally spoken of by Indians as "materialism," and they contrast with it the "spirituality" of their own system. These two terms are in constant use

in India, to express, often very vaguely, the deeply-felt antimony between the Eastern and Western outlook upon life. When he says that his own world-view is "spiritual," the Hindu means that the Indian social and industrial system (the two aspects are one) is founded upon the conception of *Dharma*. This is the conception that every man has a God-given duty to perform in the world, a duty whose nature is determined by the station of his birth.

The Hindu looks upon life as a complex tissue of responsibilities. From cradle to grave man lives in conscious relation to an unseen power, by whose ordaining his activities are prescribed. They are prescribed, moreover, in the closest possible connection with a social group, his family, through which he has relations with a wider group, his caste, and through that with other social groups and with the body politic as a whole.

When the Hindu speaks, as he so frequently does, of the "spiritual basis" of his civilisation, he means that the idea of *Dharma*, religious and social duty owed to God and man, has moulded in the past, and continues now to mould, all the relationships of Hindu life.

But when he looks at the West, which he sees, of course, from the outside, and judges by external features, the Hindu is struck, first, by a competitive system which gives its "glittering prizes" (that phrase from a certain English statesman's advice to the young men of his age is remembered in India) to the hard-headed, practical, egotistic type of man. Secondly, he is impressed by an indi-

vidualism which declares that every man must do the best he can for himself. Thirdly, he sees an all-pervading aggressiveness of outlook, which leads to constant industrial strife, and to frequent wars.

Since his own system is essentially peaceful, being based ideally upon the Hindu principle of *Ahimsa* (harmlessness), and practically upon the intricate balances and compensations of the caste-system, the Hindu finds the innate aggressiveness and bellicosity of Western life extraordinarily hard to comprehend.

The characteristic Indian *milieu* is the village, in which a dozen different castes have for two thousand years past harmoniously performed their distinctive services to the community as a whole, reaping the due reward of their labours.

But the Hindu perceives the characteristic *milieu* of the Westerner to be a huge industrial city, in which employer strives with employer for profits, and labourer strives with labourer for employment. He sees no hope in Socialism, which would replace the existing state of things by something he knows well and hates whole-heartedly—an Argus-eyed bureaucratic control. If he is a true Hindu he sees even less hope in Communism, because Communism, even more than the existing system of Western industry, is founded upon strife and division, the class war.

"*A System of Suicide.*"

Indians frequently sum up their criticism of the West by saying that to them Western civilisation seems to be founded upon the twin factors of con-

flict and greed. They declare that the values embodied in such a scheme of life are not merely wrong but destructive. The whole affair, they believe, is a delusion, and a dangerous delusion. The measure of that danger they gauge from the War; but they see no sign that the West has learnt the lesson of the War.

It is hard to convince educated Indians that this estimate, which they have reached concerning Western life, is ill-founded or superficial. One may labour long in endeavouring to persuade them that co-operation, good-will, philanthropy, a religion of love, are the true guiding forces behind the life of the West. There are few intelligent Indians who will meet such assurances with anything but a smile of polite incredulity. Industrial competition appears to them to be the motive controlling the distinctive activity of the West in normal times; whilst every now and then the Western world-spirit, they believe, flames up into true concentrated, vivid *life*, in a war—that is, in a wild spasm of suicide. The whole affair is self-contradictory, self-destructive.

Moreover, in their view it is not only actual warfare which is suicide. In the long run Western industrialism is suicide also, and this in a double sense. In the first place, it makes men into machines. It treats them as means, instead of as ends-in-themselves. It ignores human values. Where Western industrialism has been brought into India, Indians see appalling slum-problems arising (the infantile death-rate in industrial Bombay during a recent year was 666 per thousand in the

first year of life). They find also that labour becomes more and more embittered and ferocious, as a result of this wholly un-Indian method of treating men as machines. Where men are so treated it is regarded as certain that they will ultimately rise and break the system under which they are oppressed, at whatever cost to themselves in misery and starvation. Thus that system will destroy itself.

In the second place, intelligent Indians believe that Western industrialism is suicidal because there is a definite limit to what can be effected by the motive of conflicting greed, and because, when that limit is reached, the greed will prey upon itself. Industrial prosperity, they believe, may increase up to a certain point, though even so it will be ill-distributed; but beyond that point there will not be enough good things to go round. Meanwhile the population will have greatly multiplied, and standards of living will have been greatly raised. Sooner or later a struggle will commence for the dwindling stock of prosperity and its benefits. The vast machine will begin to prey upon itself. The weakest will go to the wall. Greed and selfishness, not merely amongst the masters but amongst the employed also, will reap their appointed harvest. The wheel will come full circle; and there will be wholesale disaster.

It is hard for anyone who has seen at first hand the conditions now obtaining in South Wales to laugh at such prognostications as foolish bogeys.

The point to be noticed, of course, is not that these Indian ideas concerning the life of the West

and the motives behind it are in all probability absurdly ill-founded. The significant fact is that these ideas *are held*, and held with a passionate sincerity of conviction, by the great majority of educated Indians.

Thinking India is profoundly convinced that the West is inherently materialistic, insatiably greedy, violently destructive: and that the East must be saved *at all costs* from going the way of the West.

During recent years India has been immensely interested in the fact that the largest and most populous of Western states, and the one nearest to the East, has broken away from the Western system. Nevertheless, as has been suggested above, the Russian revolution is felt by far-sighted Indians to be a mere plunging from the frying-pan into the fire. A system of militant self-interest has been nominally discarded. But few in India, except the young hot-heads of the "physical force" type of extremism, fail to recognise that a gospel of class-conflict is but the summons to a more wholesale and pervasive form of self-interest, and to one more diametrically opposed to the Indian ideal of harmonious service performed by all classes for the whole body politic.

The West and Inter-racial Problems.

There are three main respects in which the failure of Western civilisation appears to the thinking Indian to be especially marked. In the domain of inter-racial relationships he holds that the West is radically unjust and tyrannical. He is never tired of insisting that Western peoples have

used their superior material resources in such a way as to enable them to exploit and enslave the rest of the world. He maintains that Western selfishness and Western aggression, dealing in this sphere with peoples who were relatively helpless, have stolen their lands, their labour and their products, and in the process have set Western masters in control over them.

The view in question is one-sided; it is also unfair to the many philanthropic agencies of the West which are now at work in Eastern lands; but the history of the manner in which England came into control of India herself is always used as an instance of the aggressiveness and extortion just referred to, and is made to act as a standard by which the relationships may be judged between other Eastern and Western peoples. The exclusion of Asiatics from Australia, the colour-bar legislation in South Africa, the treatment of the negroes in the United States, the unequal treaties between the West and China, are all used as texts from which to point the same moral.

Practically every issue of every Indian-edited newspaper re-echoes this theme—the cruelty and oppression practised by European upon non-European races. Indians believe that Western civilisation has definitely failed to provide a *modus vivendi* by which race can dwell side by side with race, in the same world, in a spirit of neighbourly give-and-take, and without the phenomena of aggression and selfishness, subjection and servility. A typical instance of this belief may be found in the recent institution in India of "Misrule Day," on

which the trial of Warren Hastings is commemorated; and it must be noticed that what is commemorated is not the fact that Hastings was tried, but the fact that he needed trying—a highly significant distinction.

The West and Problems of Nationality.

Again, educated Indians believe that Western civilisation has failed to solve the problem of international relationships.

India herself was submerged by barbarian tribes in much the same way and at much the same time as Europe. Yet the invaders were absorbed into one corporate whole.

In Europe, on the other hand, the barbarians set up separate states, which in time crystallised into mutually antagonistic nations. From the period of the Hundred Years' War to the present day Europe has been distracted and torn by the quarrels of these nations. Religion—even a religion nominally founded on love—proved not only powerless to prevent conflict, but dangerously liable to add fresh fuel to the flames. Statecraft on the one hand, science on the other, came to be yoked to the purposes of national aggrandisement. Finally came the appalling tragedies of the Great War, when national hatred suddenly showed itself to constitute not merely an unfortunate accompaniment of a vast beneficial process, but a virulent disease causing civilisation to beat itself to death in agony. However enlightened, however progressive that civilisation might be—so argued India—it *must* be wrong, and it *must* be a gift of death from the West

) the East, because it had brought about the Great Var, as the inevitable outcome of unrestrained ational rivalries.

The West and the Problem of Class.

In the third place, Western civilisation is criticised s having failed to solve the problem of class. ndia sees the increasing bitterness of class struggle, he growth of large political parties organised to ecure class dominance, the deliberate cultivation of lass consciousness, the growing conviction that he relations between the classes are inevitably hose of conflict.

She notices with keen interest the progress of the great experiment undertaken in Russia to build a stable polity on the doctrine of this class conflict. She remembers the 800,000 executions, and the wenty million deaths from famine. And she lecides that, here again, Western civilisation is not nerely rotten but suicidal. Sin—the sin of selfish violent greed—is bearing fruit in death.

The Idea of Progress.

There is a deeper antimony still between the spirit of India and the spirit of the West. It is a subtle tendency of division which scarcely rises into consciousness, and yet beneath the surface is responsible for a great deal of the modern conviction that East and West are best apart, and that the East must be saved at all costs from the powerfully intrusive influences of Western life.

The East from time immemorial has been static. The Indian social system—and it is this system, not

political organisation, which embodies the true life of the people—has remained for ages fixed unalterably in the mould of caste. But ever since Plato introduced the idea of progress, the West has been dynamic, for ever restlessly experimenting, changing, developing.

The Indian mind feels instinctively that there is too great a risk in this changefulness, this perpetual adventuring after a continually receding ideal. That ideal India refuses to accept. For it seems to her to be merely the ideal of transitory happiness (generally material happiness); and she believes that in the long run only disaster can result from the pursuit of so unworthy an aim.

In other words, the idea of progress is regarded in India with grave suspicion. The Hindu feels instinctively impelled to ask concerning it: "Progress towards what?" He is definitely not inclined, at least without very grave consideration, to accept that idea as applicable to the life of his own country. He sees how easy it is to pull down existing systems, and how perilous and arduous is the task of replacing them by anything really better. He has experience of such innovation.

India is still torn by the secular strife between Hindus and Musalmans. These Musalmans are in the main the descendants of Hindu converts to Islam, which acted for centuries as a destructive force upon the ancient Hindu order of things. Islam pulled down, but it could not replace. The converts could not be re-assimilated to the Hindu system; and the national life is still enfeebled by this foreign element.

But Islam is far nearer to the Hindu way of life than is the dynamic progressive West. Therefore Hindu India instinctively shrinks with horror from contact with the West and with Western "progress"—for such contact means subjection, and subjection means the gradual permeation and transformation of an old, proved, static system by one continually changing, continually pursuing with Titanic energy ends which India believes to be both petty and dangerous.

De-personalising Tendencies in the West.

The East has also a deep, though perhaps scarcely articulate, conviction that Western civilisation tends inevitably to the discounting of personal values, to the setting of the machine above the man, to the sacrifice of the well-being of the workers for the sake of profit, to the destruction of millions in warfare for the benefit of ruling classes.

In the East the person is everything. Politics are a clash of persons rather than of principles or parties. *Dharma* is a man's personal responsibility to perform his duty in society and in industry. Education is the personal relationship between individual pupil and teacher. The ancient village polity, and to a lesser extent the life of the modern small country town, is a hierarchy of such personal relationships between the members of the various castes and their fellows in their own castes, or in those above or below their own. Everything depends upon the *kind of man* the governor is, or the landowner, or the master, or the teacher, or the village Brahman, or the village cobbler.

In the industrial West, and where Western industry has been naturalised in the East, India believes that this is not so. Everything has become hard, mechanical, systematised. Everywhere the individual has been sacrificed to the machine. His personal quality has come to be ignored; and all that counts is the manner in which he can perform, as mechanically as possible, certain strictly prescribed services to the machine.

As the sovereign denial of her own spirit, and the outstanding instance of the de-personalising tendencies of the West, India would name the cold inhuman calculation with which, in war, a certain number of "casualties" are reckoned worth paying for the attainment of a certain prescribed objective.

CHAPTER VII

HOW AN INDIAN LOOKS AT INDIA

India the Goddess-Mother.

ONCE, years ago, a Hindu student to whom I had been able to render some small service presented me with what to him was a very precious thing, a portrait of India as the Mother. She was portrayed as a gracious and beneficent goddess, holding in her hands the gifts which she gives to her children. India is idealised somewhat in this way by almost all thinking Indians. Their country is to them not only the object around which their patriotic aspirations are centred; she is a person, and a goddess.

It has already been remarked that government in the East, very much more than in the West, is an affair of personal relationships, depending upon the individual character and attitude of the ruler.

This is true also—and very markedly true—of the relationship between the ordinary Indian and his country as a whole. He thinks of her as a person, towards whom he stands in a personal relationship, that of a child to its mother; and the mother-child relationship is endowed with a peculiar delicacy and sanctity in India.

But not only is India a mother to her children; she is a goddess. She is to be revered and wor-

shipped. Her biddings have the authority of spiritual duty. They are binding with all the force of religion, in a land where religion covers the whole of life with its inviolable sanctions.

In worshipping India the Mother, Indians commit themselves to her cause, and pledge themselves to do everything which she bids them do for her sake. Therefore, patriotism in that country is a more spiritual and idealistic force than elsewhere, and may at any moment tend to become transfused with the fire of a mystical fanaticism.

This is the reason why the young Indian of the thinking classes thinks, breathes and lives politics in a manner quite unknown in the West. Politics to him are religion, the service of India his Mother.

Religion and Swaraj.

The extraordinary outburst of anger which occurred in India upon the publication of Miss Mayo's *Mother India* was occasioned not so much by the realisation that the assertions made in that extremely ill-balanced onslaught upon Indian life were one-sided and therefore false, as by the feeling that here was an insult wantonly levelled against a beloved and adored Person.

From this point of view Miss Mayo's choice of a title for her book was exceedingly unfortunate. It seemed in India to constitute a deliberate flouting, deriding and defiling of holy things. It was heartless blasphemy against the most sacred of all goddesses.

This worship of Mother India may be a new thing, only developed concurrently with the unifying

of the country by means of modern communications and the spread of the knowledge of the English language. None the less it is an immensely powerful force. An idea is here embodied; and is endowed with religious sanctity in the eyes of an intensely religious people. It is an idea which they feel to be imperilled by the contact of the West.

Thus *Swaraj* (independence) comes to be demanded as a spiritual right; and all the forces of religious fanaticism are ranged to fight for it. "Slavery" and "outrage," with the rest of the extremists' vocabulary, instead of being discounted as the picturesque language of the mob-orator, are conceived in terms of insult offered to the personal Mother, and breed the passionate resentment which is aroused even more spontaneously and forcibly in India than elsewhere by such conceptions.

The winning of *Swaraj* becomes an imperative religious duty, and a duty enjoined also by the deepest family feeling in a land where the family counts for very much more, and the individual for very much less, than in the West.

Hinduism and Inter-racial Problems.

But religion enters even more subtly than this into the demand for *Swaraj*. It was noticed in the last chapter that the Hindu criticises Western civilisation as having failed—and failed not only disastrously but suicidally—in solving the three great problems of race, nation and class.

The Hindu believes that his own ancient civilisation has in the past succeeded in solving these very problems; and that, if it is only left to itself,

it may continue to solve them in the modern world. He does not regard the caste system as by any means perfect. He will frankly acknowledge, indeed, that numerous and very serious abuses have crept into it in the course of the centuries. He is especially eager that the injustice of Untouchability should be rectified, and that social intercourse should be more freely permitted between the castes.

But, with all its imperfections, he believes firmly that the caste system has succeeded where Western civilisation has failed, that it has fulfilled the crucially important function of solving the problems which are destroying the West, the problems of race, nationality and class.

The almost infinite variety of races which have invaded India have eventually been assimilated to the Hindu system of life. This has been accomplished through the caste organisation of society, whereby it is an easy matter to welcome into the existing system any newly-arrived element, and to give it a niche to itself, where it may keep its identity, whilst at the same time sharing in the life of the whole community.[1]

In origin caste was probably devised to this very end. The Sanskrit word for caste means literally "colour"; the higher castes came into existence as social divisions, by means of which the Aryan invaders kept their blood pure from intermixture

[1] The great exception is, of course, the Musalmans; but in many regions they too tend to become, to all intents and purposes, another caste. The same applies to the Indian Christians.

with the dark-complexioned inhabitants of the land which they had conquered.

As time went on, other races were fitted into the caste system in a similar manner, being given a higher or lower status as circumstances might direct. The device proved a simple and practical method of providing for the social distinctiveness which race-feeling demands, without that process of wholesale extermination which in other countries the sudden infusion of fresh racial elements has tended to bring into play. Thus to-day a dozen distinct race-groups may exist peacefully side by side upon the same territory in India, through the simple device of caste.

The Hindu maintains that, shockingly evil as is the practice of Untouchability, and grievously as it needs reform, there is a good side to it, since it shows that in the past tolerance was achieved (through the caste system) in racial relationships instead of extermination. He is inclined to maintain that elsewhere the ancestors of the modern Untouchables would have been killed off, centuries ago, by dominant races; and that the same would have happened in India had there been no caste system. This may be partly the reason, he feels, why Untouchability is a problem peculiar to India. Elsewhere there has been no caste system to secure tolerance and survival.

Hinduism and Problems of Nationality.

With regard to the problem of nationality, the Hindu holds that the Indian system has proved elastic enough to give scope to national aspirations

inside the whole body of Hinduism, without the turbulence incidental to the fulfilment of such aspirations in the West. He maintains that to all intents and purposes there is a Maratha nationhood, a Bengali nationhood, a Sikh nationhood—and others also—but that under the system of caste these can exist side by side, even in certain cases on the same territory, without the emergence of a national rivalry embittered enough to endanger the unity of India as a whole.

The Hindu does not deny that in the past there have been epochs of violence and anarchy, consequent upon some great uprush of national feeling in this part of India or that (for instance, during the rise to power of the Maratha Confederacy); but he affirms that the Hindu social system is capable both of surviving such epochs unimpaired, and of assimilating and taming the insurgent elements whilst giving them the opportunity of self-realisation. This is done, not by any agency of force and compulsion, but by the steady influence exercised by an ancient system essentially tolerant and comprehensive, and provided with a simple and effective method of welcoming any new element, by means of the easy expedient of starting a new caste or castes.

This process is still to be seen at work all over the country. When the Bengali, for example, with his strong communal consciousness of what is in effect the Bengali sub-nationhood, migrates to some other part of India, he tends to take his place in the social system of his new home as the member of a new and unofficial caste, the "Bengali." When his son joins a local school and is asked his caste, he

will generally reply, not Brahmin or Kayastha, but "Bengali." [1]

There may be considerable local resentment at the advent of strangers in this way; but a niche is automatically provided for them by the caste system, and by the infinite series of subdivisions of which that system in practice admits. New-comers are enabled to hold themselves aloof, and their neighbours are entitled to remain aloof from them; but at the same time they have a recognised place in the new social environment which they have chosen, as the members of yet another caste.

When the Hindu notices the appalling ferocity of national bitterness in such an area as the Balkans, where the national elements are closely intermixed, he is inclined to thank his gods for the caste system, which enables half a dozen national sentiments to exist peacefully side by side in the same locality, and has saved his country from anything approaching the national conflicts of Europe.[2]

Hinduism and the Problem of Class.

With regard to the problem of class, the Hindu believes, as has already been pointed out, that his social system provides a solution for this problem, by teaching that the way in which a man earns his livelihood is a question of religion. He is called

[1] Sometimes the reply is (*e.g.*) Bengali Brahmin; in this case the principle is the same, for a new sub-caste has evidently been formed.

[2] It is well to remember that India is geographically as large as Europe (without Russia) and ethnographically quite as diverse; she is also as thickly populated.

upon by his *Dharma*, his duty both to God and man, to follow the manner of life, and to practise the occupation, belonging to the caste into which he has been born. His motive for so doing is not that of selfish greed for gain, but that of service to a wider whole than himself, first to his family, then to his caste, then to the whole body politic.

Under the old village organisation a diligent following of his hereditary caste occupation, however lowly, would, under ordinary circumstances, ensure to the individual worker a living of some kind, even if it was only a meagre one.

When subjected to exceptional stress, as, for instance, in time of war, pestilence or famine, the caste system might break down temporarily, and thousands or even millions might perish. But its constitution was so simple and elastic that it would automatically re-establish itself when the population began to increase once more.

The essence of the caste system to the devout Hindu is its religious basis and nature, which is expressed for him in the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita*. In that slender volume, the most precious of all his scriptures, he is exhorted to practise without questioning or complaint, and without striving for "the results of action," the duties enjoined on him by his caste, as the most acceptable offering which he can make to God. To this day the great majority of Hindus believe that by obeying caste regulations and by working diligently at caste-callings they are serving God and man, and winning salvation for their souls.

But where modern industrialism has gained a

footing in India the caste system rapidly loses nine-tenths of its authority. The mill hands become disassociated from their ancestral affiliations. They live herded together, under what are, in the East at any rate, exceedingly unnatural conditions, and conditions full of peril both to health and to morale.

The rapid spread of Communism under these circumstances seems to the Hindu only what must be expected. With the decay of the old caste bond comes the loss of the ideal behind caste—that of a man's daily work in life as a religious duty to be performed for God. Simultaneously the worker is brought into contact with what the East feels to be the soulless and radically materialistic outlook of Western industry. He finds himself nothing but a cog in a machine grinding out profit for an impersonal company, many of whose directors live thousands of miles away. He becomes a de-personalised unit in a de-personalised system; and this to the Hindu constitutes a flat denial of everything that makes life human.

Communism comes to these workers as a promising means of release from an intolerable situation. It promises the wrecking of the system which has robbed them of their birthright. It promises pitiless war against the class which, they feel, holds them in bondage. It promises deliverance from a life which they know instinctively to be one of heartless futility for the individual worker, and a denial of all the best elements in their country's past.

Almost invariably also the Indian mill-worker stands in a relationship which amounts to little

short of slavery towards the money-lender. His removal from the village where his forefathers lived has robbed him of the very real measure of security given even to the poorest peasants by their position in caste and by their relation to the land.

It is not unusual to find the mill-worker paying interest at the rate of two annas in the rupee *per mensem*, which means that a loan of Rs.60, if none is repaid (and very frequently the cost of living in the city is so high that none can be repaid), becomes in five years a debt of nearly Rs.70,000. Obviously any refuge will be welcomed from the intolerable burden of such indebtedness. In the large industrial city where the present writer has lived for a number of years (and in Bombay also), the money-lenders are mostly Afghans, and thus a bitter racial hatred grows up between the money-lender and his victim. This is reinforced by religious hatred, since the money-lenders are Musalmans and their victims Hindus. The result is occasional bloodthirsty rioting, and constant poisonous ill-will. Under such conditions it is easy to see why the Communists, whose system offers a short way with such money-lending and money-lenders, find many ready converts among the mill-hands, to whom their propaganda will be apt to appear as a gospel of salvation.

It is not to be wondered at, since these things are so, that the mill districts of Bombay and other large industrial cities become hot-beds of Hindu-Musalman strife on the one hand and of Communism on the other.

Nor is it to be wondered at that orthodox, steady-

going Hindus all over India, realising the peril threatening their country through Hindu-Musulman strife and the class warfare of Communism, become more and more convinced that the very existence of the motherland depends upon the early winning of *Swaraj*, whereby alone—as they hold—she will be able to control and check, at whatever cost, the baneful process of Western industrialisation. For the Hindu believes that India's safety depends upon her being separated from that process. He has no confidence in the belated attempts of Government to control the situation by arresting Communist leaders and repressing Hindu-Musalman rioting; since these things, he believes, are only symptoms of a disease whose root is the dominance of the West in India. He knows that the Government is committed to the support and fostering of the industrial system. *Swaraj* must mean the cutting loose of India from that system; and he is driven to the belief that this can only be effected through the breaking of the British connection.

Ahimsa.

Closely related with the ancient Hindu ideal of *Dharma* is that of *Ahimsa*, non-violence. This is founded not merely on the Hindu belief in the high sanctity of life as such, but on the conviction that "force is no remedy." It is the principle which Mr. Ghandi set in the forefront of his extraordinarily successful campaign in the years before the War for the redress of Indian grievances in South Africa.

The same principle was invoked, though less

successfully, in the Non-Cooperation struggle of 1920–22, and in various minor episodes, such as the extremely interesting campaign against Untouchability at Vykom. On this occasion, in order to maintain the right of the Untouchables to use public roads and Hindu temples, batches of volunteer *satyagrahis* (defenders of the truth) stood in an attitude of petition against the police cordon for a period, in all, of sixteen months. During part of this time the hardships undergone were very severe; floods occurred, and the volunteers were standing up to their shoulders in water, the police being in boats. The exposure proved fatal to some of the *satyagrahis*. Throughout the campaign the vow of non-violence was rigidly adhered to. In the end the Travancore State Government gave way and conceded to the Untouchables the rights which they demanded.

The Vykom struggle aroused keen interest throughout India. It was felt that the method of political and social agitation here successfully put into operation was one directly in accord with ancient Indian traditions, fulfilling the Hindu ideal of *Ahimsa*, and yet capable of achieving remarkable results even under modern conditions (as was proved not only at Vykom, but when the march of Mr. Gandhi's 2000 coolies led to the South African Government's granting their demands).

But the Hindu feels instinctively that *Ahimsa* is incompatible with Western civilisation. It depends essentially, for the possibility of its existence as a political and social force, upon a certain responsiveness to spiritual ideals. This practical idealism

may be possible even for coolies so long as they remain genuinely Indian, but it lies poles asunder from Western thought and practice.

Who ever heard of rights being won in the West in the way in which the Untouchables won their rights at Vykom? Rights are won in the West by organisation, by material resources, by fear, in the last resort by force. The sixteen months' ordeal of peaceful petition appears to the Westerner abject, servile and ridiculous. Such methods he feels, deep in his heart, to be despicable, whilst India knows them to be fruitful and noble. In nothing—the Hindu believes—is the fundamental spiritual antinomy between West and East more plainly to be apprehended than in this matter of "harmlessness."

The Position of Women.

The position of women in India always appears to the Westerner to constitute a peculiarly baffling problem. The casual visitor, of the type of the authoress of *Mother India*, may indeed feel quite certain of the facts regarding this problem; but even she does not suggest a solution to it, whilst no one who has lived long in close contact with the people can remain for one moment content with any such hasty diagnosis of the situation.

On the one hand there are the plague-spots, the marriage of little children, the horrors of widow burning and of female infanticide only a century back, the forbidding of widow-remarriage, the existence (though on a rapidly decreasing scale) of temple prostitution.

On the other hand there is the autocratic power of women in the home and upon the social system generally—a power which writers of the *Mother India* type somewhat ingenuously acknowledge, whilst at the same time accusing Indian manhood of barbarously tyrannising over womanhood.

The truth probably is that in this matter, as in so many others, India is uncompromisingly idealistic. Life is a sacred thing, so sacred that the orthodox (as occurred recently in connection with Mr. Gandhi's *Ashram*) raise a violent outcry if even a hopelessly wounded animal is destroyed. Woman is the life-giver. Therefore woman is sacred.

This is the reason why Rama, for example, in the great epic the *Ramayana*, deliberately disobeyed his father and obeyed his mother, when the two gave him contrary instructions. Every orthodox Hindu would say to-day that Rama chose rightly, and for the reason that more respect and reverence is owed to the mother than to the father, because the mother is the life-giver, and sacrifices herself more for her children.

The sanctity of life imparts sanctity to the life-giver and the life-protector. But the sanctity of life, where that principle is followed to its logical conclusion, implies that the woman must become a life-giver as soon as possible; and hence Hinduism has become responsible for child-marriage.

Woman the Life-server.

The West finds it exceedingly hard to comprehend (in spite of the teachings of the New Testament) that one who is in the position of a servant can at

the same time be ruler and guide. But the position of Indian womanhood is a concrete and practical demonstration of the possibility of such a situation; and of the stability and permanence which it gives to a social system.

The Hindu looks upon woman not only as the life-giver, but as the life-protector and life-server. She is servant of her children and of her men-folk. She remains with downcast eyes in the presence of her husband. She cooks his food, but never eats it with him. Yet in a true sense she is his master; and she is his master because she is his servant.

No one has lived for long in company with Hindus without realising this immense, though hidden, power of their womenkind. The reason why female education is not extended more quickly, why conditions of childbirth are still so primitive, why even the most emancipated of men meekly perform all manner of old-world rites and ceremonies, why widow-remarriage is not more widely practised, is to be found not in the perversity of the Indian man, but in the immense power of the Indian woman.

Instinctively the Indian woman dreads all Westernisation, even Western education for girls, because she feels that it will weaken that regard for the sanctity of life which is at the heart both of her own world-system and of her own individual position in the home.

Illogical Logicality.

Caste is ideally a great organisation of service. It is an ideal carried out so logically and compre-

hensively as to end in illogicality. The position of woman in India is the same. She rules because she serves. Her whole existence is built on the ideal of serving life. Such service led her in the old days to drown her children that they might obtain a higher and better life in the next "birth." It led her to immolate herself on her dead husband's pyre, that she might continue to serve him in death and beyond. It leads her still to refuse remarriage, that she may serve her husband by her continuing faithfulness to his memory. It leads her sometimes (though happily with increasing rarity) to sacrifice her daughters to the service of the gods. In each case the ideal of service is carried, with ruthless logic, to an illogical conclusion, even as Robespierre carried his ideal of brotherhood, with ruthless logic, to the illogical conclusion of the Reign of Terror.

No one can comprehend India till he realises these facts: that womanhood exercises a power and authority which, though unseen, is far greater than that exercised by womanhood in the West; that this power and authority is founded upon the ideal of service;[1] and that the social wrongs under which Indian womanhood suffers are due to the driving of this ideal of service to a conclusion which though logical is yet illogical.

If life is sacred and the service of life is the highest of all callings, it is logical to say that a woman should be married as soon as she can bear children; but it is at the same time illogical, for both mother and child are weakened and may die, whilst for

[1] This subject is admirably dealt with in a delightful book by an Indian woman, Miss Sorabji's *Between the Twilights*.

both the highest values of life are sacrificed. Yet the orthodox Hindu, well understanding the evils of child-marriage, will declare that the service of life is worth it all, and that however much she suffers and is sacrificed, the young mother is happy, because she is fulfilling her destiny of service.

It is obvious that such a realm of ideals will make for selfishness in man, and for a refined and very beautiful unselfishness in woman. Yet to this criticism also the Hindu will reply that his system is better than the Western, because it gives chief reverence to the ideal of service, and breeds at least amongst one half of the population a type of character extraordinarily altruistic. The social system of the West, he maintains, is founded upon greed, and fails to produce either in man or in woman a lasting and dominant character of unselfishness.

Swaraj and Indian Womanhood.

For ages the ideal of Hindu manhood has been embodied in Rama, who deliberately set the commands of his small-minded mother above those of the king his father; and the ideal of Hindu womanhood has been Sita, who was ready to burn herself because she had incurred the suspicion of unfaithfulness to her husband. In a community which genuinely believes in the sanctity of life, and in service of life as the highest of all callings, these twin ideals are highly significant; but they remain almost incomprehensible to the peripatetic Westerner.

Contact with the West, the orthodox Hindu

believes, is certain to shatter the ideal of service which gives to Indian womanhood its hidden but almost absolute power. He dreads Western ideas of marriage, divorce, and the sharing of women in public life. He believes that in "freeing" woman they would de-spiritualise her, and make her a slave —to herself. He is convinced that the spreading of such ideas would undermine the very basis of Indian civilisation, and so would bring down the social structure which has stood unshaken through 3000 years of turmoil and anarchy. He values above everything permanence—the permanence of a system which has defied time and change, and has continued up to the present day to embody in the actual life of hundreds of millions of human beings the ideal of service, the service on the one hand of woman for life, and on the other of man for family, caste and community. He demands *Swaraj* because he believes that through it alone there can be preserved a system which makes, or should make, religion—*Dharma*, duty, responsibility in the sight of God for service to God and man—the ruling force in the life of every Indian man and woman.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW AN INDIAN LOOKS AT *SWARAJ*

The Mela.

THE real meaning of the power which religion exercises over the Indian mind is best to be seen at one of the great *mela* gatherings. These are religious assemblies held at important centres of pilgrimage. The most famous is that at the confluence of the sacred rivers Ganges and Jumna. Here incredible numbers come together, especially on the occasion of the greatest gatherings of all, which occur every twelfth year. On the last occasion of this character those in charge of the arrangements reckoned the number of worshippers at over three millions. The pilgrims believe that by bathing at this sacred spot on the right day they secure a decisive advantage in the cycle of re-incarnation.

It is impossible to see the immense crowd assembled on such an occasion without realising that one is in the presence of a totally different world-order from anything to which we in the West are accustomed. Here are millions of men and women, the great majority of them very poor, who have travelled in many cases several hundreds of miles under excessively arduous conditions, and are willing to endure the dangers and hardships inevitable in such an immense concourse. They

do this for the sake of nothing which the West would regard as a "practical" end, but for the purging of their sins and the benefit of their souls.

To an orthodox Hindu such an occasion is immensely significant and valuable, in spite of the epidemics, accidents and tragedies which are inseparable from it—in spite also of the inevitable recrudescence of evils such as infanticide, which is due to the belief that death at the holy spot on the holy day ensures a better "birth" in the next incarnation.[1]

The Hindu sees in such a gathering the assurance that the heart of his country is still sound, still other-worldly, still set on *Dharma*, on the right performing of religious and social duty. He knows that whilst this spirit endures, the caste ideal of a man's work in life as religious service will also endure, together with the worship of India the Mother, and the ideals of a non-materialistic system of life for which India stands. But he is also absolutely convinced that the things of the West are bound sooner or later to destroy the spirit of devotion which makes these vast religious gatherings possible; and therefore, for the sake of his

[1] Compare the following:—"The Irish correspondent of the *New Statesman* tells us that a Free State Judge recently declared from the Bench that 'infanticide was becoming a national industry'; while another of his colleagues stated that 'in such cases it was useless to ask juries to convict' (*The Nation and Athenæum*, April 27, 1929, p. 142). This Western form of the evil, being connected with the motive of family limitation, lacks the altruistic element which lies behind Hindu infanticide, the desire to give the child the chance of a better 'birth.'"

religion and of all that it means to him he demands *Swaraj*, the independence without which India cannot, as he believes, be saved from Western secularism.

The Internationalism of Tagore.

A growing number of Hindus believe that the Indian way of life is not only applicable to India, but may be of significance for other countries as well. Tagore, for example, repeats again and again in his *Letters* his conviction that the West, with its greed of gain, its scientific warfare, its chronic state of industrial crisis, its breathless hurrying after unworthy objectives, stands desperately in need of the Indian teaching that life only gains meaning as it is seen in the light of spiritual ideals, the peace of God, the performance of all labour as service to God and man.

Tagore stands for a real internationalism, a united activity of East and West for the well-being of each, to the end that a new world-order may be evolved, in which the East shall contribute the spiritual ideals which lie behind her great religions, whether these originated in Palestine or in India, whilst the West shall give the practical organising ability without which those ideals will be unable to build a better future for humanity as a whole.

Indian Sinn Fein.

Tagore, however, represents a type of thought which meets with but scanty acceptance amongst his fellow-countrymen. He is the leader of a tiny minority. His name is indeed scarcely known

outside Bengal by any but the most highly educated men.

The great majority of Hindus have little or no sympathy with any such cosmopolitan outlook, and are definitely opposed to the political policy of the few wide-spirited men who recommend an attitude of receptivity towards the best which Europe has to give. "Once admit the right of the West to influence us, with the superiority of the Western outlook and methods of work," so runs the thought of the great majority, "and India is doomed. The West is so efficient, so systematic, so intrusive, that our ancient institutions can never stand against her influence. The only hope for them, and for the survival of the Indian attitude to life, work, religion, is total freedom from Western interference. Men like Tagore, who recommend an attitude of receptivity towards what is best in European life, are more dangerous to India, because more Indian and better able to attract and convert Indians, than those who are already Westernised, and so have become self-admitted aliens in their own country."

This, of course, is the policy which was adopted by the Sinn Fein party in the struggle for Irish independence. It is a policy of "ourselves alone," and it is rapidly gaining adherents all over India. In a sense it is a policy of fanaticism, of root and branch severance from much which, its adherents frankly admit, might be of great material service to their country. It involves the risk of reaction in political life, in social reform, in such essential matters as education, the raising of the outcastes, sanitation, communications, scientific agriculture,

famine relief. Above all it involves the risk of grave internal disorder.

The Hindu's Belief in Hinduism.

But the average Hindu, whilst recognising the risks which *Swaraj* involves, is fully prepared to allow his country to take those risks. He believes so firmly in her ancient socio-religious system on the one hand, and he dreads so profoundly the all-pervading influence of the West on the other, with its scientific warfare, its systematisation, its de-personalised industrial system, and the strife to which this leads, that he is willing to run any risk whatsoever in order to give his country entire freedom.

The modern Hindu recognises quite frankly the shortcomings and abuses of his own system. He knows that it is conservative in outlook, and marred by cruel injustices. But he regards it as exaltedly idealistic. It is a colossal effort to translate the ideal into the actual, extended over an immense area of the earth's surface, pervading almost every action in the lives of hundreds of millions of human beings, prolonged through millennium after millennium. He regards it as on the whole extraordinarily successful. In his view the ideal of *Dharma*, both for individual and for community, has been very widely and effectively translated into practice. Untold millions of men through the centuries have lived their lives under the motive not of personal greed or of the search for selfish pleasure, but of a spiritual service owed to God and man. Untold millions of women have

given their all in obscure and humble service to life, and yet through that service have been recognised as the controlling factor in the family polity, and through it in the wider relationships of society.

The Hindu sees immense value in all this. That value may have been lessened by various abuses—he does not deny the fact; and he wishes that the abuses should be removed. But he is anxious to see this process of purgation carried out in the right way, and above all in a manner which will not endanger the whole fabric of his social system. His attitude may be summed up in the words of a vulgar English proverb. He is extremely, even feverishly, anxious lest the baby be thrown away with the bath-water. *Swaraj* is desired, and ardently desired, as the only method which seems likely to be effective for preventing this tragedy.

The Hindu Counter-Reformation.

To adopt a historical parallel which is perhaps more appropriate than such parallels usually are, the modern Hindu takes the attitude of Loyola in regard to the old religion, where Tagore takes the attitude of Erasmus, and the European takes the attitude of Luther. The immense inroads already made by this Luther upon the Hindu system have brought about a movement of Counter-Reformation, as fanatical in many respects as was its historical prototype; as intolerant of the men of half-measures, the cosmopolitans, the moderates: and as earnestly resolved that the old system shall be purged of abuses, and made new and strong for the

sake of the permanent spiritual values which it enshrines.

More than this, these men of the Counter-Reformation love the old faith for its own sake, as ardently as the Jesuits loved the Catholic Church. They are resolved that it shall be served loyally and unselfishly, at all costs, because it commands their enthusiastic allegiance.

Swaraj and Social Reform.

The ruthless idealism of the East is best seen at one of the great religious gatherings. At the Kumbh Mela near Allahabad the present writer has himself witnessed a procession of three thousand entirely naked ascetics. As they walked down a lane roped off (with great difficulty) in the midst of the immense crowd, women would force their way under the ropes, and bowing low, take the dust upon which the holy men had trodden and place it upon their own heads.

To the carefully groomed and supercilious English officers who were present (it was war-time) this scene was revolting, even obscene. To the Hindu it was a significant triumph of spirit over flesh. It effectively symbolised that complete detachment of the immortal spirit of man from all material things, which means in India not only the giving up of personal property, but for the true ascetic the abandonment even of clothing. It symbolised also the extinguishing of all carnal desire, so that a procession like this could take place through the heart of a vast crowd without offence or indecency.

Nothing could be more characteristic of the difference between East and West. On the one hand, idealism carried with uncompromising logic to illogical extravagance and abuse. On the other hand, a detachment from inconvenient idealism of any kind, and withal the War—instability and suicide in the midst of amazing material success.

The modern Hindu is passionately desirous to keep the idealism at all costs, even though its outcome may revolt the West. He is too tolerant of abuses, no doubt; but he himself insists that if he is given the right to save his idealism—*i.e.* if he is given *Swaraj*—he will attend to the abuses himself. At present his attention is taken up with the major necessity, the winning of *Swaraj*, the saving of his Hindu system.

This is why the enterprise of Social Reform labours to-day under so great difficulties. The Hindu feels instinctively that Social Reform is a beginning at the wrong end. It seeks to patch up certain abuses of the present system, when the system itself is liable to total dissolution. No existing abuse is for a moment to be considered, he believes, in comparison with the wholesale disaster which will overtake his fellow countrymen if the West succeeds in "modernising" India. His task is to struggle for *Swaraj*: it will be time enough, when this is won, to amend and readjust the salvaged Hindu institutions.

The ardent Hindu Nationalist feels indeed that Social Reform may be actively dangerous at the present juncture. It may not only distract attention from the main object in hand, the winning of

Swaraj, but it may encourage a short-sighted discontent with the Indian system of life, so that reformers may be inclined to scrap the system as a whole in order to remedy individual abuses, thus "throwing away the baby with the bath-water."

In this way it comes about that the most patriotic and public-spirited Hindus, men whose conscience has been deeply stirred by such wrongs as Untouchability and Child-marriage, will tell you with profound conviction that Social Reform must wait till *Swaraj* is won, for the political issue is paramount.

The Industrial Problem.

Every observer of modern conditions in India is impressed with the urgency of the industrial problem.

The rush to the cities of great numbers of unskilled labourers, the appalling housing conditions, the high rate of infantile mortality, the lack of sanitation, the drunkenness, the breakdown of family and caste morale, the rapid spread of Communism, the universal and crushing indebtedness—these and a host of similar factors constitute a situation of obvious and critical danger. In a book written as long ago as 1922, an impartial and very accurate observer[1] made the following statements regarding various aspects of this problem:

"This machine (one used in the Calcutta jute mills) is still the occasion of minor accidents which occur to workers who are trying to steal oil by pushing rags and tufts of soft waste into the machinery in motion. It is a commentary on the

[1] J. H. Kelman, in *Labour in India* (Allen and Unwin).

standards of living." . . . "In a very large number of mills little groups of children gaze out on a world that arouses no answering vitality (they are drugged with opium by their parents)." . . . "A large number of women attached to men working in the mills have no legal bond of union with them." . . . "It seems difficult to see any way in which the result can be other than the creation of a population with a steadily lowering moral tone." . . . "Cases have been recorded where ginning factory managers have been convicted for working their women labourers for twenty-four hours."

In some respects the conditions recorded in these extracts have been improved since 1922; but in the main the industrial situation has grown steadily more dangerous. Embittered and protracted strikes have become more and more frequent, and more and more apt to be marked by violence on the one hand and by Communistic propaganda on the other.

To the dangerous situation thus created, the European, whether Government official or economic expert, seems to the Hindu to have only one solution, viz. more industrialisation, more efficiently organised. Communism is to be suppressed, violence put down, if need be by more violence; disputes are to be patched up, and strikes settled, by any hand-to-mouth expedient which may turn up; and, as regards the country as a whole, wants are to be increased, standards of living raised, new demands created, trade augmented, new factories erected, profits multiplied.

The whole policy appears to the enlightened

Hindu almost grotesquely wrong-headed. He knows well enough the chronic difficulties of the West with regard to unemployment. He has read of the condition of South Wales, and of a mining industry with 200,000 superfluous workers, for whom work must somehow be found in other industries. He is certain that, if the present process of headlong industrialisation is continued in India, the same difficulties will in time appear—indeed they are already appearing. And he believes that in India those difficulties will be on a vastly greater and more dangerous scale than in the West, if only because the population in his own country is so much larger, and lives permanently so much nearer to the starvation line.

Swaraj and Industrialism.

As has already been pointed out, the orthodox Hindu does not believe for one moment that anything stable and beneficent can be built up in his country on a policy of creating new wants and raising material standards—still less upon the ordinary industrial motives of big profits on the one hand and big wages on the other. Such policies and motives are fundamentally opposed to the principles which from time immemorial have been at the heart of all the greatness of his country.

The Hindu sees no meaning or usefulness in an India waxing materially wealthy through the denial of her own true genius, which bids her abjure all Desire. And he does not believe that such prosperity would be lasting. He knows himself to be the heir of a system which has stood like a rock for

3000 years, because it has appealed to motives diametrically opposite from those of modern industrialism—to service, duty, simplicity, an honourable poverty. He sees competitive industrialism everywhere questioned in the West, and repudiated by the largest Western community. India might be more prosperous for a generation or two, through industrialism; but what is a generation in the history of India? After that, he believes, saturation point would be reached, prosperity would decay, and appalling tragedies result. Therefore he demands *Swaraj*, the political fact of independence, because he is certain that so only can his country be preserved from industrialisation.

This feeling—and it is exceedingly strong—accounts for much which appears to the Westerner illogical and extravagant in the Nationalist movements of modern India. A few years ago, for example, a great new dam was to be erected in a valley on the Western Ghats. It was to collect water for a hydro-electric scheme, which would supply Bombay with cheap power, and so render possible a great extension of the Bombay cotton industry. This would mean more profits, more slums, more peasants drawn from village to town, more strikes, more opportunity for Communism. The building of the dam would also mean the uprooting from their houses and from their lands of many hundreds of sturdy Maratha peasants. The compensation promised was generous; but everyone knew that the peasants themselves would not benefit by this, but that it would find its way into the hands of the money-lenders, to whom (as in

the case of almost all other Indian peasants) they were deeply indebted.

The matter was made a test case by the Nationalists. They organised relays of "volunteers," who lay down on the ground in front of the engineers, where the rock was to be blasted for the foundations of the dam.

Immense interest was aroused all over India; for here, it was felt, was a definite forcing of the issues at stake between East and West. On the one hand there was the East, struggling by the only weapon in its hand, the actual bodies of its peasants organised in a scheme of passive resistance, against the West, with money, brains, force at its disposal in unlimited profusion.

The West, of course, won in the end; and by all Western standards the arrangement by which it won was just and generous enough. But the incident brought home with great force to the mind of India the fact that, things being as they are, the West must always win; and this means, to India, that the true human values and the true spiritual ideals must always be sacrificed, until *Swaraj* be gained.

Without *Swaraj* India feels herself to be entirely helpless. She cannot enforce what her ancient idealism tells her to be right. The realisation of this fact fills the Nationalist with an almost implacable resentment against his rulers. However just they may be, however lavish the prosperity they foster, however beneficent the inventions they introduce, the sanitation they enforce, the hospitals they build, the famine-relief they organise, the

genuine Indian Nationalist will have none of it all. It is dust and ashes in his mouth; for it all means Westernisation, the decay of *Dharma*, the building up of big industries, the sacrificing of the human values nurtured in a religious civilisation founded on the precepts, "Blessed are ye poor," "Blessed are ye that mourn," "Blessed are ye meek."

Westernisation, in other words, is plainly incompatible with the spirit of a system which still, in fact and not merely in name, gives chief honour to the renouncer, the *sannyasi*, the man who was rich, like Gautama the Buddha, but who for the sake of others made himself poor.

"Western Delusions."

It may be well to point out once more that the Indian attitude in this respect is not one of fanatical reaction, or of intransigent obstructiveness; nor is it due to ineradicable prejudice against foreigners and foreign influence. The Indian thinker honestly does not believe that Western civilisation will last, as Indian civilisation has lasted. He believes that its prosperity and power are inevitably predestined to be short-lived. They are fallacious. They are "delusion" (and his religion has much to say about delusion), because they are founded on what his religion tells him to be wrong motives, exploitation, selfishness, greed. The War has convinced him of all this.

It is entirely vain to try to convince the Hindu either that Western civilisation is founded on the teachings of Christ; or that its activities are beneficent, and its contacts with the East essentially

philanthropic. Such a thesis, however convincingly argued, and with however lavish a wealth of illustration from the abolition of slavery, the Indian Famine Code, modern democracy, and other similar evidences, merely leaves the educated Indian with a fixed impression that his English friend is, like most other Englishmen, constitutionally a confirmed hypocrite. He will be too polite, no doubt, to express this conviction in words, but it will be there none the less; and the conversation will result in making him more certain than ever before that there is no future for his country except in *Swaraj*, since even sympathetic Europeans are so readily hoodwinked by their own Western delusions.[1]

The present writer has recently been paying a visit to the distressed area in South Wales. He has been staying in the cottage of an out-of-work miner. He has been taken from place to place by another ex-miner, and has been shown the actual

[1] A somewhat similar situation arises when the Westerner descants upon the superiority of the Western family system, with its free choice in marriage, its equality of husband and wife, its high moral standards, its discouragement of child-marriage. The Indian will be too polite to call his Western friend a hypocrite. But his mind will go to the Western cinema films with which India is flooded, to photographs and news items in the papers (such as a paragraph which appeared recently in the Indian Press concerning an American actress aged nineteen who had already been several times married and divorced), and if he is "England returned," to scenes which he has witnessed at night in certain parts of London. He will not call the Westerner a hypocrite or a liar; but he will be profoundly convinced in his own mind that he is one.

meaning of unemployment—dismantled collieries, emaciated people, disease, the despair of long idleness. The town where he was staying had a population of 9000, of whom 400 in all (including clerks, school-teachers and so forth) were in employment. It is a town where, before 1921, 1300 people owned their own houses: now the number is under fifty. Most significant of all the indications of distress was the melancholy procession of out-of-work men staggering each afternoon down from the hillsides, through the snowdrifts, with the sacks of coal which they had laboriously collected for their homes from amongst the old pit-heaps. This, more perhaps than any other visible sign, gave the impression of universal breakdown, of the end of an age. These human beasts-of-burden seemed like the survivors groping for sustenance amongst the ruins of Rome after she had been sacked by the Goths. When one talks to them, one finds these miners convinced that the machine-age is over for them, that the prosperity of their valleys can never be built up again on the basis of coal—and coal has been the life of those valleys. No less than the Indian Nationalists, they arraign the whole system of industrialisation, because from the beginning it has ignored human values.

It is hard, when one has seen these things, to find much solid satisfaction in the old superficial optimism which was preached as the message of the West to India: "Modernise your methods of production: scrap your caste system and your ancient institutions: increase your wants; and you shall be numerous, happy and prosperous." If they

follow our advice, how long will the prosperity last? In any case would it not be safer and better to let them decide their future for themselves?

Swaraj and Hand-spinning.

Mention has been made above of what occurred at Mulshi Peth, when the Nationalists turned the building of a dam, designed to supply cheap electric power to Bombay, into a test case. More significant than such sporadic episodes is the continued agitation which has been carried on since 1920 against foreign cloth. Countless bonfires have been made of clothing and valuable fabrics, with a solemnity worthy of a better cause. The motive is partly that of breaking the hold of foreign trade upon India, and partly that of encouraging the making of homespun cloth in the houses of the common people.

It is maintained, and with justice, that the vast majority of Indian people, notably the peasants, have a great deal of time on their hands, especially in the rainy season: that they live permanently on the borders of starvation; and that their position would be immensely improved—especially *vis-à-vis* the money-lenders—if they possessed a subsidiary industry, to which they could turn in odd moments, and which would enable them to add some small amount to their ordinary earnings. Hence the campaign against foreign cloth, and the widely-extended movement to promote hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

Enough success has attended this nation-wide effort to convince the Indian Nationalist on the one

hand that India may be made independent of the West in regard to the prime necessity of clothing-stuffs, and on the other hand that she will never be made wholly self-supporting in this respect without *Swaraj*.

It must not be supposed that the demand for *Swaraj* in this connection is caused merely by an obstinate prejudice against everything foreign. It is essentially an economic policy, and one based upon careful consideration and inquiry. The Nationalists believe, and support their belief with a formidable array of statistics, that the importation of foreign cloth, coupled with the introduction of Western industrial methods, has killed what was once a vital element in the economic life of India, the "cottage" spinning and weaving industry, and in so doing has dangerously impoverished the land and its people. They believe also that it is still not too late (though it may be almost too late) to reverse the process, and that immense benefits would accrue to the mass of the Indian population through its reversal. There is only one means, in their view, of that reversal, namely *Swaraj*.

Once more, what is relevant to our present consideration is not whether or no the Nationalists are right in holding these beliefs, but the fact that they do hold them.

Swaraj and Hindu-Musalman Conflict.

There is another problem which is always at the back of the educated Indian's mind when he speaks of *Swaraj*. It is the problem of Hindu-Musalman conflict, which, he is fully aware, is a cancer eating

into the vitals of his country. Nothing which the European can say will convince him that the conflict is not the result of a secret policy amongst the rulers of India, the policy of "Divide et impera." Subconsciously or consciously the British encourage the division—so he believes. He finds the proof of this in the fact that Hindu-Musalman rioting very rarely occurs in Indian India, those two-fifths of the country which are comprised in the Indian states.

So deeply rooted is this suspicion, that (as the present writer knows to his cost) the slightest attempt made by a non-official European to see justice done to the weaker party in a time of Hindu-Musalman fighting leads immediately to his being execrated as a Government agent, who is insidiously promoting strife.

Nothing will persuade thinking Indians that this communal problem could not be solved in British India as well as in Indian India; and nothing will convince them that it will ever be so solved without *Swaraj*. To the objection that the solution might mean oppression, or civil war, the Nationalist replies, "That is our affair, not yours. Your rule has seen this problem emerge in its modern acuteness. It is time that you gave us freedom to find a solution where you have failed to find one."

If the case of modern China be cited, with the appalling miseries which the lack of a strong central control has brought upon rich and poor alike, through banditry, militarised anarchy, famine and every kind of outrage, the Nationalist will reply: "The game is worth the candle. Whatever

suffering *Swaraj* may bring upon us, we must have it; for otherwise we are traitors to our past and to our future. The *Dharma* of India—her service to the world—is to demonstrate that a civilisation can still exist which is based upon the ideal of *Dharma* for individual and community—the ideal that they can work and act, not for selfish greed but for service of God and man. The fulfilling of that destiny is worth everything that it may cost. It can only be fulfilled through *Swaraj*."

Here again the idealism of India is ruthlessly logical. Indeed the intensity of the modern demand for freedom can only be understood in the light of this psychological fact, that to-day, as throughout her history, India has enjoyed but little of the Western ability to compromise ideals (as shown, for instance, in the phenomenon of warfare between Christian nations). She applies her ideals, naïvely, whole-heartedly, with a logical thoroughness which is apt to lead to what the Westerner regards as illogical extravagance.

In his veneration for life, to take an example, the Indian ascetic will spend his days with a cloth bound over his mouth, lest he should swallow and destroy a fly; and in Ahmedabad recently the proposal to kill off a number of mad dogs, which had become a peril to human life, met with most determined opposition from the orthodox.

Much of the cruelty to animals which offends the Westerner is due to this same ruthless idealism. Life is sacred, and therefore must under no circumstances be destroyed. Even a poor beast hopelessly crippled by a passing car must be allowed

to die in agony instead of being put out of its pain.

For the Westerner, who feeds on beef and mutton, to protest against this form of cruelty, or against the harsh treatment meted out to draft animals, is taken as only one more proof of his hypocrisy. What right has he to protest, when his method of life results in the existence of shambles in every city and town of the West?

Here again it is impossible for either Easterner or Westerner to see anything logical in each other's illogicality. In the East that illogicality is one of idealism pushed too far. In the West it is one of compromise. Each seems to the other gross perversity and wickedness.

Swaraj and Caste Hatreds.

In Southern India the past decade has seen emerge into the open a menacing cleavage between Brahmans and non-Brahmans. The Brahman ascendancy has in the past been more oppressive there than in other parts of the country. It is there that "Brahman streets" exist, which may not be entered by members of the lower castes; and Brahmans, owing to their superior alertness in securing education, have there for long enjoyed a monopoly of office in the ranks of the public services which are manned by Indians.

The non-Brahmans have now awakened to the significance of these things, have become "class conscious," and have for some years been agitating successfully for a place in the sun. The Brahmans indeed complain that in some respects they them-

selves are now the oppressed party, since they are denied for caste reasons the position to which their education and experience of affairs entitles them.

The most public-spirited Indians deplore the division thus set up, though they recognise the fact that Brahman intolerance in the past has brought it about. Here again they maintain that the influence of a foreign government is, consciously or unconsciously, "Divide et impera," and that this cleavage can only effectually be healed under conditions of *Swaraj*. They dread, moreover, a far more serious cleavage, which may arise out of the strife between Brahmans and non-Brahmans, and of which the signs are already apparent, viz. the complicating of this caste antipathy by the class antipathy which is the fruit of Western industrialism.

In a typical Indian industrial city the majority (often the great majority) of the mill-hands belong to the lower castes. A very large proportion of them are outcastes. In the city in which the present writer has spent many years, these outcaste mill-hands form the largest single community. Almost all of them earn enough to enjoy the municipal franchise. At present they have not realised their power in this respect; and the Municipality is still controlled by the higher castes, mainly the Brahmans. But the mutterings of the coming storm are plainly to be heard; and the day is certainly not far off when the outcaste mill-hands will realise that, if they act together, they can do something to avenge the none-too-distant time when each of them was compelled to drag the branch of a tree behind him, lest his unhallowed footmarks should remain in the

dust of the public way, and to wear a pot slung round his neck, lest his spittle should defile the soil of Mother India.

Moreover, it will not only be a case of caste strife in relation to Municipalities and other public bodies. The bitter doctrines of class warfare are spreading rapidly amongst these outcaste mill-hands. In the West we are familiar with the anger aroused amongst the workers by the feeling of disinheritance, exploitation and enslavement. But to this will be added in India a ten times greater flame of anger, kindled by the memory of many centuries through which the outcaste has been denied the treatment due to a human being. It may quite confidently be prophesied that the bitterest class strife which the West has ever experienced will be child's play to the strife which will develop in an industrialised India between the outcaste workers and the propertied higher castes.

The reaction of the Westerner to this menace is often merely, "Serve them right." He feels a chastened satisfaction that now at last the outcastes may have the opportunity of revenge. But the patriotic Indian does not feel things in this way. He knows too well the appallingly disruptive effect upon his country's life of the strife between Hindu and Musalman, and between Brahman and non-Brahman. He can foresee nothing but disaster in the future if what will certainly become a far more bitter element of strife is permitted to develop.

Here again the educated Indian can discern no hope except in *Swaraj*. So long as a Western Government remains in control, industrialisation

will go forward, and the complication of caste conflict by class conflict will become more menacing. In his view the process of industrialisation must be reversed, and so the risk of class conflict removed, whilst every effort must be made to right the ancient caste wrongs by the removal of Untouchability and by the throwing open of all careers equally to all castes.

These great enterprises of social reform must wait, however, till *Swaraj* is gained. At present the Hindu's attention is fixed, with painful intensity, upon the political issue, just as the attention of Irish Sinn Feiners was fixed, in 1920, upon political issues, to the exclusion of the social and economic problems whose solution has since been courageously attempted.

This parallel between the India of to-day and the Ireland of 1920 holds good in a considerable number of directions. In both countries the national movement was connected with the revival of an ancient culture, and with a demand for the recognition of national values handed down from an ancient civilisation. In both there was a demand also for the establishment of a national type of education, designed to revive and foster the cultural heritage of the past, and purged from the contamination of foreign elements. In both, again, there took place a renaissance in vernacular language and literature, and a movement for the placing of the vernaculars on a footing not merely of equality with English, but definitely of priority over it.

In both, these cultural factors of national revival

gradually sank into insignificance as the political struggle increased towards its crisis; for this absorbed all attention, and concentrated all activities upon itself.

In both, the rulers were frankly incredulous that self-government could mean anything but anarchy, and maintained this belief by drawing attention to what they regarded as the fundamental incapacity of the governed for working democratic institutions, and to the deep religious and social cleavages which divided the subject people.

In both, a phase of intellectual cosmopolitanism, which had failed to secure independence, was succeeded by a movement of Sinn Fein—" ourselves alone "—fanatical in many of its modes of expression, and tending to the conviction that nothing but physical force could gain freedom for the Motherland.

The people of England do not realise how rapidly the political situation in India is approaching that which obtained in Ireland during the years leading up to 1920. There is the same exasperation at what are regarded as unjustifiable delays, the same sense of bitter urgency, the same growing impatience with pacific counsels and doctrines of steadily ordered evolution, the same deepening conviction that nothing but desperate remedies will suffice, the same hardening of hearts, the same dependence upon external support in a prospective appeal to physical force (though in this case the support comes from Russia instead of from the United States), the same rapidly increasing resolve to gain independence *at whatever cost.*

In India, as in Ireland, repression may succeed for a time, tutelage may succeed for longer, but neither can give a real solution to the problem of national awakening.

There is only one solution; and that is freedom.

CHAPTER IX

HOW AN INDIAN LOOKS AT RELIGION

The Conquest of Desire.

HINDUISM has two main elements of strength, which account for the extraordinary permanence and solidity of its social system, and for the grip which it retains over its adherents, from the cradle to the grave. It connects life and faith: and it lays great emphasis upon the following of ideal personality.

Something has already been said about the former of these two salient features of Hinduism. The Hindu is instructed, especially by the greatest of all his scriptures, the *Bhagavadgita*, to fulfil loyally his caste duty, without selfishness or greed, and without anxiety about the results of his activity as they effect either himself or others. Whether his caste is that of a farmer or of a clerk, whether he is a scavenger or a priest, his path in life is clear: he must practise his caste craft honestly and in the spirit of a religious duty. For God on the one hand, and his personal destiny after death on the other, demand such faithfulness of service.

Above all—as the Hindu sacred literature teaches a thousand times over, from beginning to end—his service must be disinterested. If he works with any greed in his heart he is lost. If he works for

results and not for the sake of the work, as service to God and man, he is lost also; his destiny will infallibly be wretchedness in the next birth beyond death.

Westerners very seldom realise the power of this belief in India, and the immense benefits which it has conferred upon the country and its inhabitants. Deep in the very marrow of the Hindu's soul is this inherited and ingrained conviction—that if he works at his task in life with selfish desire in his heart, he is infallibly doomed to disaster in the next birth. He will return as a beggar, a leper, a foul beast.

There is, of course, much that is naïve in this attitude; and much that is, in a sense, anti-social. But these central commandments of Hinduism—"Thou shalt not have selfish desire in thy heart: Thou shalt not work for the sake of the results of thy work"—have unquestionably acted as a great refining and purifying influence, through thirty centuries, upon the life of many thousands of millions of human beings.

It is obvious to the Hindu's mind that these commandments are flatly at variance with the spirit of the West, and especially with the spirit of Western industry: indeed that they are, from the point of view of such industry, not merely reactionary but subversive.

The West says that needs must be stimulated, standards of life raised, a spirit of healthy competition encouraged, markets developed and exploited, labour charges kept down, business rivals eliminated, and so forth. The West says that efficiency must

be studied all the time, results constantly checked and scrutinised, balance-sheets examined, losses cut, profits kept up.

Nothing, the Hindu feels, can ever by any possibility reconcile these two totally divergent world views. Nothing except *Swaraj* can save India from *Mahapap*, the deadly sin of unfaithfulness to ancient truth, through the admitting of selfish desire as the main motive in life and work.

No written words can convey one-hundredth part of the keenness with which this fundamental antinomy is realised by sensitive spirits in India to-day. Nationalism, as the West comprehends nationalism, is only a small element in the cleavage. Even religion, as the West understands religion, is a minor factor. Two totally different world-outlooks are opposed, that which inculcates "Desire," and that which condemns "Desire." And to the Hindu "Desire" is the root of all the misery and evil in the world.[1]

The Hindu system of life can never be comprehended by the Westerner till he recognises it as an immensely long-lived and widely-extended institution designed to embody these twin ideals, that of all work as service, and that of the abandonment of selfish desire. Its elasticity, its extraordinary survival-value amidst invasion, tyranny, pestilence and

[1] For a further comprehension of this fundamental element in Indian thought, a thorough reading of the *Bhagavadgita* is essential. There is a good translation in the Temple Classics; and also in Sir Edwin Arnold's "Song Celestial." The *Gita* forms, for scores of millions of Hindus, both devotional text-book and practical guide to the affairs of life.

famine, its inclusiveness, its hold over its adherents, are only to be understood in this way. Moreover, the modern fever for *Swaraj* is only to be understood by realising that Hindus have now awakened to the fact that this ancient system is at last dangerously threatened.

Probably for the first time in its history Hinduism is fighting for its life. It is fighting against a world-view which denies the very foundations upon which the Hindu system is built.

Buddhism for a time completely overshadowed Hinduism in India; but it was no real foe; for it was the child of Hinduism and it accepted the fundamental teachings of its mother, insisting even more vehemently than she that desire must be extinguished. Islam deprived Hinduism of temporal power, and stole away many from her lower castes; but Islam was at least Eastern, static, ordered, reverencing the holy man who abandons this world for the sake of the next.

But the West is wholly different. Her spirit is a ferment of Desire, of ambition for tangible Results. She is for ever changing; for ever forcing her life and thought more intrusively upon others. She cuts away the basis of Hindu faith. Already she has made immense strides in de-Hinduising India. Her factories, her industrial towns, her labour problems, her class war, her competitive industry, her restless spirit, her political system, have begun to shatter the old life wholesale. At all costs, the Nationalist feels, something must be saved from the general wreckage.

The Guru-Ideal.

It is not a conflict of religions which is thus joined. The modern educated Hindu knows perfectly well that the West is not Christian. Probably he has read the New Testament. He may have studied in a Mission school or College. He knows in his heart that, whatever official Christianity may say, official Christianity does not matter; it is impotent, and may be disregarded, because not only did it fail to prevent the War, but it actually blessed the War.

Yet the Hindu knows also that though Christianity may have failed, Christ is on his side; for Christ taught that work must be service, and that selfish desire must be conquered. The thinking Hindu has pondered on the significance of certain sayings which he has found in the New Testament: "Blessed are ye poor," "He who would be greatest amongst you, let him be a servant," "He who renounceth not all that he hath cannot be my disciple."

This is why it is possible for a great modern leader of Indian thought to declare that, "India rejects Christianity, but accepts Christ."

In India, as has already been remarked, everything turns upon personality. From time immemorial religion has been summed up in the personality of the god on the one hand and in that of the religious *guru*, the preceptor, on the other. At the appearance of any great teacher the distinction between god and *guru* tends to disappear; and the *guru* begins even in his own lifetime to receive divine

honours. Thus it is possible for the person of Christ to be adored and his teachings followed even by devout Hindus who utterly reject Western Christianity as a system.

The influence of the *guru* is immense even to-day. The story is often told in the Maratha country of the way in which the great Maratha conqueror, Shivaji, surrendered his throne to his *guru*, the sage Ram Das. Even a modern Indian student will regard the duty owed to his *guru* as standing before that owed to his father.[1]

In the past, Indian religious history has been the history of a series of great *gurus*, each of whom has impressed his personality upon the circle of chosen disciples whom he has gathered round him. The greatest of all such Indian *gurus* was Gautama Buddha, who refused Nirvana until he could bring salvation to all who were in need; and who in a former birth is said to have given his life freely in order to feed a hungry tigress and her young. From his day to our own there has been a continuous succession of great spiritual leaders.

The teachings and example of these leaders survive and are powerful to-day, through the tradition of their life and personality, rather than through the

[1] An interesting case occurs in a book *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, written by a student named Krishnadas, to whom acknowledgments are due for some of the material in this chapter. Krishnadas speaks continually of the influence of his *guru* upon him, but only mentions his father once, as follows: "In this town (a small town of Eastern Bengal) lives my father; I accordingly took a few hours' leave from Mahatma Gandhi, and visited my home; my father is held in much respect locally"

scriptures which tell of them, or through the communities which they may have founded.

Mr. Gandhi.

By far the most important *guru* in India to-day is Mr. Gandhi. For a period of some two years, at the time of the Non-Cooperation movement, he enjoyed a prestige such as no other Indian has possessed in modern times. He was greeted all over the country as an Incarnation of the Supreme Being. He was adored and worshipped as a divine leader. Crowds would prostrate themselves before him, and would even lie down across the railway line in order that his train might not proceed till all had enjoyed an opportunity of beholding him and of receiving his blessing. He could quell a great crowd by a few words. His instructions were followed implicitly in industrial and social disputes.

Mr. Gandhi even possessed that most remarkable of all kinds of power—the power to make great masses of men obey him implicitly when he ordered an unpopular course of action. This was seen when, early in 1922, he forbade the commencement of Civil Disobedience, because violence had broken out in various parts of the country.

In the Bombay strikes of 1921 the news that he had vowed to fast till the disturbances were at an end had an immediate effect in quelling them. In 1924, when he took upon himself an expiatory fast of three weeks, as an atonement for Hindu-Musalman rioting, the whole of India hung in suspense upon the issue of his ordeal; and a great influence

was exerted, for the time being, upon the relationships of the two communities.

Wherever he goes Mr. Gandhi is besieged by crowds of peasants and other persons, all eager to win the benison which they believe the mere sight of him will bestow upon him.

In short, Mr. Gandhi was—and in a measure still is—the representative Indian, the Man of India. He was a dictator with an unparalleled power over the hearts of his fellow-countrymen. As has already been mentioned, his power was so great that, when he was arrested, the whole country obeyed implicitly his stringent instructions to show no resentment and to engage in no violence or rioting by way of protest.

His Simplicity of Life.

Yet this dictator, even in the days of the plenitude of his popularity, insisted on travelling in crowded third-class carriages, slept on station platforms amongst coolies, carried his luggage on his head like a peasant. In the *Ashram* [1] which is his home he lives as a simple member of the community, giving all his authority away to others; he shares in the humblest tasks of the common life, and chooses for himself those functions which would generally have been left to servants or scavengers. When any of his associates makes a mistake, or goes wrong, he will always blame himself first, and seek for the cause of error in some fault of his own.

At the height of the Satyagraha struggle in South Africa, when he was guiding two thousand coolies

[1] Religious institution.

on their famous trek from Newcastle to Pretoria—whereby the claim of the Indians for fair treatment was made good—he himself took charge of the cooking arrangements, and helped with his own hands in the preparing and distributing of the food. During the Non-Cooperation campaign in India, his admirers were continually showering costly gifts upon him. These he would always hand over to the public funds of his movement, saying that he had no box in which to keep such precious possessions!

He maintains that "movements do not fail for lack of funds, but because they have too much,"[1] and that "all institutions run on the interest of accumulated capital cease to be amenable to public opinion and become autocratic and self-righteous." He believes that movements can be carried on without any funds at all, and that a gift of five rupees is more than one of twenty-five rupees if it is all that a man can afford. He holds no personal property of his own.[2]

In short, this Man of India is the typical *sannyasi*—the saint who by complete renunciation of the world has conquered the world. He is beloved by his countrymen not merely for himself and his teachings, but because they realise instinctively that he is the spirit of the East incarnate, eager to do peaceful battle with the falsehood and delusion upon which Western life is built.

[1] *Satyagraha in South Africa*, by M. K. Gandhi, p 202. (From this book much help has been obtained in this chapter.)

[2] Krishandas, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 284.

His Teaching of Ahimsa.

That battle is not waged with the weapons of this world; for at the heart of Mr. Gandhi's teaching and policy is *Ahimsa*. In his youth, when he was insulted by railway officials in South Africa, and hounded by a Durban mob, he refused to prosecute his assailants. It was the same when he was attacked and half killed by a Pathan. He is never tired of impressing upon his followers the fact that *Swaraj* can only be won by non-violence, and that any resort to violence automatically proves that the country is not yet ready for freedom. He says, "We need soldiers who will rather be killed themselves than kill others." He has no hatred for England, but believes that his movement will benefit her. He refuses all sympathy or support to any act of brutality or violence committed in the name of *Swaraj*. Where violence does break out, as in Bombay in 1921, he goes straight to the point of danger, and strives to bring peace, "greeting the chance of death with delight."

The following is a characteristic saying of Mr. Gandhi: "We must love our English administrators, and pray to God that they may have wisdom to see what appears to us to be their error. I believe in the power of suffering to melt the stoniest heart. We must try by our conduct to demonstrate to every Englishman that he is as safe in the remotest corner of India as he professes to feel behind his machine gun. Either we believe in God and His righteousness, or we do not. No

power on earth can stop the march of a peaceful, determined and godly people."

It is significant that the official Government Report on the Material and Moral Progress of India in 1921–2 declared that "During the year 1921 anarchical crime practically ceased. This party has been largely captured by the idealism of Mr. Gandhi's movement."

His Policy of Satyagraha.

In addition to *Ahimsa*, Mr. Gandhi's policy includes a firm belief in the unaided power of truth. He will not degrade and pollute truth by a policy of violence undertaken on its behalf; but he sets no limit to the influence which may be exercised by *Satyagraha*, unflinching determination in the cause of truth. He has made of such "passive resistance" (though this is a poor equivalent for the Indian term) a weapon which may achieve extraordinary results, as has been shown in South Africa, in the Vykom struggle against Untouchability, and on many other occasions.

Satyagraha is essentially a spiritual movement. It depends in the first place upon an impregnable resolution in all those taking part in it that they will suffer any wrong rather than give way to the spirit of violent revenge.

When there was trouble, a few years ago, regarding the management of a Sikh shrine in the Punjab, the Sikh *Satyagrahis*, many of them old soldiers, marched up to the defenders of the shrine, in the attitude of prayer, and were struck down unresistingly, rank after rank. An eye-witness of the scene has told

the present writer that the courage and self-restraint of these *Satyagrahis* were beyond all praise. Mr. Gandhi himself says that the motto of the *Satyagrahi* must be, "How can you kill the voluntarily dead?"

In addition to this self-restraint and conquest of the spirit of violent revenge, the *Satyagrahi* must have a complete devotion to truth. Mr. Gandhi believes that no oaths should be needed to reinforce his followers' truthfulness. They must speak and act the truth spontaneously. Nevertheless, they will always have cause to remember that, "truth is ever in the minority, since truth itself swiftly becomes corrupted in the hands of a majority." Truth is more than truthfulness, though it includes truthfulness. It means unswerving loyalty to the principles of right and justice, in all connections and relationships.

But the *Satyagrahi*, in spite of his own devotion to truth, must not be disillusioned by the absence of this quality in others. He must go on trusting them, and believing the best of them, though they may have grossly deceived him twenty times over. Such trustfulness will call out honesty and courtesy in the *Satyagrahi's* opponents. Mr. Gandhi says, "Distrust is a sign of weakness, and *Satyagraha* implies the banishment of all weakness, and therefore of distrust, which is clearly out of place where the adversary is not to be destroyed but won over." [1]

Hence a *Satyagrahi* must always be willing to take a man at his own valuation.

[1] *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 503.

His Gospel of Work.

Satyagraha implies a rejection of worldly standards and weapons; and therefore a complete simplicity. At the crisis of the Non-Cooperation struggle, when he was master of immense national funds, Mr. Gandhi took a vow to reduce his own wants, and even his clothing, to a scale which he felt would typify his sharing of the poverty and miseries of his country. From that time on he has appeared wearing only two garments, and those made of rough homespun. He rises at four in the morning. His food is of the simplest, and he often spends a considerable time each day in grinding the corn for his own bread. He encourages a similar Spartan simplicity and industry in his followers. They are all of them to work with their hands, as well as with their minds and their tongues. They are especially enjoined to practise hand-spinning, which Mr. Gandhi believes to be the most efficacious way of adding to the national wealth, for a number of hours each day. Such work, apart from its economic value, teaches discipline.

Mr. Gandhi himself spins for half-an-hour each day before his midday meal, and if he has not succeeded in doing this, will not take the meal. At the Gandhi *Ashram* in Ahmedabad everyone washes his own clothing, including Mr. Gandhi himself; and all the members do some useful work each day about the house. Those who left Government employment in consequence of the Non-Cooperation campaign were told that they must support themselves by hard work at the spinning-

wheel. Such work is to be regarded in the light of a religious duty. "We must regard the spinning-wheel as a Sacrament; then it will turn our faces Godward."

But all this work, in accordance with the teaching of the *Gita*, must be undertaken without "striving for results." Mr. Gandhi believes that "the fruit of *Satyagraha* is contained in the movement itself: the struggle is itself victory." Whatever the outcome of his self-sacrifice may be, the *Satyagrahi* is to be content, because he has done his best for the truth, in the spirit of truth. None the less, given resolution and uncompromising non-violence in the *Satyagrahi*, the victory of his cause is inevitable.

Amongst the followers of Mr. Gandhi there is to be complete equality. He himself says, "There is no distinction of high or low in our army: there are no leaders and no followers in the cause of *Satyagraha*, for all are leaders and all followers." All are dressed alike, in the simplest homespun. No state or ceremony is observed; and at the highest point of his popularity Mr. Gandhi himself could be approached at any time by the humblest coolie who wished to see him.

Satyagraha and Religion.

Satyagraha is much more than a temporary expedient designed to correct this or that specific injustice. It is a new weapon of creative social and political reconstruction. Its originator believes that it can be used on the widest scale, and that it forms "a civilised method of winning freedom as against the barbarous methods of the West."

But *Satyagraha* depends for its success upon spiritual factors, above all upon fearless readiness to bear anything in the cause of right without retaliation, and upon a complete trust in Divine protection and guidance. In other words, this new weapon of Indian nationalism is essentially a religious weapon.

Mr. Gandhi is himself a man of deep religious convictions. He constantly carries about with him, and daily studies, a copy of the *Gita*. He acknowledges also his indebtedness to the New Testament, to Tolstoi (especially to his *The Kingdom of Heaven is within you*) and to Ruskin (especially to his *Unto this Last*). He wrote as follows in his paper, *Young India*, on December 20, 1928: "I can give my own testimony and say that a heartfelt prayer is undoubtedly the most potent instrument that man possesses for overcoming cowardice and all other bad habits. Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within. . . . The more I live, the more I realise how much I owe to faith and prayer, which is one and the same thing for me. And I am quoting an experience not limited to a few hours, or days, or weeks, but extending over an unbroken period of nearly forty years. . . . Not until we have reduced ourselves to nothingness can we conquer the evil in us. God demands nothing less than complete self-surrender as the price for the only real freedom that is worth having. And when a man thus loses himself, he immediately finds himself in the service of all that lives. It becomes his delight and his recreation. He is a new man, never

weary of spending himself in the service of God's creation."

During the struggle in South Africa, Mr. Gandhi constantly endeavoured to impress upon his *Satyagrahis* that their sole help and refuge was in God.

This religious spirit finds expression in a variety of ways. The day is begun at the Ahmedabad *Ashram* with a religious service, held at 4.30 a.m. For a number of years Mr. Gandhi has observed every Monday as a day of complete silence, and to a large extent of silent prayer. If visitors come on urgent business, they must communicate with him in writing. He has a strong belief in the value of silence as a means of religious worship, and he teaches the necessity of getting below feelings and emotions, and of listening to the "still small voice." One of his closest disciples says of him: "His spirit is often riveted inward, but often also he becomes an incarnation of delight, full of laughter and joy." He tries to teach his followers the necessity for cultivating the spirit of loneliness even in the midst of business.

He is exceedingly fond of children, and will spend much time in playing with them. They throng around him, and will contentedly go to sleep in his arms. Amongst those that are dearest to him is an outcaste child. To all and sundry who are in contact with him he is always known as *Bapu*, father (or rather "Daddy"). One of his disciples says of him: "He draws all hearts by an irresistible charm."

Yet Mr. Gandhi is adamant in following his feeling of what is right, and on one notable occasion

even told his wife that she must leave his *Ashram*, because she was opposed to his plans for showing by practical example how Untouchability must be broken.[1]

At the same time he never forces his followers to obey him, but " leaves them to accept and carry out as much of his teaching as they can, in a natural way and on their own initiative."

Similarly, he is very tolerant towards the religious convictions of others, believing indeed that all religions lead to the one God.

Various incidents in his life, especially the Bombay riots of 1921 and the fast of 1924, show that this Man of India has a deep comprehension of the fact that a leader may be called upon to suffer voluntarily in his own person the consequence of the folly and error of those to whom he would give freedom, in order that by suffering in this way he may be able to overcome and banish their follies and errors.

Such is the man who for countless thousands in India sums up both religion and national service, uniting them into one great claim for whole-hearted loyalty and devotion. He is worshipped as the Master-*guru*, as the great modern Incarnation of the Supreme Being. His words have the weight of more than human authority. He stands for the fearless vindication against the invading West of all that is highest and most valuable in the life of the East. His is felt to be the ideal personality which must be followed in the great campaign now on foot, which is to win true freedom for India the Mother.

[1] Krishandas, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 262.

Words may be used of Mr. Gandhi, and of the movement which he leads, which were originally written of Tolstoi, the teacher to whom he owes so much :

> " The essence of the moral law, the essence that makes it God's law, is simple enough : is simple enough, in fact, to torpedo the whole Western system of morality. It is just ' Give more than you get '—always. But Western morality says that the only principle by which human nature can be got to move is ' Get, whenever possible, more than you give.' Tolstoi's achievement is to have brought all the teaching of the Eastern prophets and saints into one formula, the most revolutionary that was ever devised." [1]

Here is the heart of the antinomy between East and West.

Swaraj is desired by the enlightened Indian because he believes that it will give her freedom to follow this teaching—to obey not only her own prophets and saints, but those of Palestine also.

[1] Willcocks, *Between the Old World and the New*, p. 231.

CHAPTER X

HOW AN INDIAN LOOKS AT THE FUTURE

"*India can never Govern Herself.*"

BUT what after *Swaraj?*

This question forces itself home on everyone who has lived long in the East.

Has the Indian Nationalist anything which can be called a policy for the future of his country, beyond the cutting of the cable which binds her to England, and the reversal, so far as possible, of many aspects of Westernisation? Will he ever be able to solve the outstanding Indian problems, that of Hindu-Musalman strife, that of the Indian states, that of the applicability or non-applicability of democratic institutions in the Indian environment, that of an all-pervading poverty, that of the North-West Frontier?

It is probably true that not one single European official in India, however sympathetic to Indian aspirations (and there are not a few genuinely sympathetic), really believes in his heart that India can govern herself, or that democratic government is suited to her needs. There are probably very few even amongst non-official Europeans who believe these things.

But, on the other hand, no English official in the United States about the year 1770, however sym-

pathetic, really believed in his heart that the thirteen colonies, with all their divisions and jealousies, could govern themselves. And the belief was in a sense well-founded, as is shown, for example, by the manner in which the various colonial legislatures treated Washington and his army in the War of Revolution, and by the way in which they behaved to each other and to the country as a whole in the years immediately succeeding that war.

Again, few of the English governing class in Ireland before 1921 really believed that the Irish could govern themselves, or could make democratic institutions a success; and during the weary period of the civil war, which succeeded the signing of the English-Irish treaty, it appeared almost certain that these prognostications would prove correct, and that Ireland was doomed to hopeless anarchy.

During a recent visit to the distressed area in South Wales, the present writer heard expressed, by both official and non-official Englishmen in those parts, precisely the same kind of opinion to which the Englishman in India so frequently gives expression. "These Welsh people are great talkers: they love an argument; but when it comes to constructive action they are helpless. They are split into numberless cliques and factions, political, social and industrial. Any sort of elected body for the control of public work is rendered impotent by personal and party animosities of an extreme bitterness. What is needful is to 'cut the cackle.' Strong executive action is the only hope."

We may come even nearer to home than this. There are probably very few Englishmen of the "governing class" who can honestly say that they believe that the Labour Party can govern this country. They are convinced that there is poverty of leadership, too much reliance upon talk, too little political experience, a lack of real public spirit, a confusion of motives, and a dangerous strife of interests, within the Labour camp.

These convictions are honestly held, in India, as in Ireland, Wales or England. But, none the less, we have realised in these latter cases that the only possible policy to pursue, however risky it may appear, is the granting of freedom. Sooner or later we shall be brought to the same conclusion in India; and better sooner than later.

The power to govern can never be developed without the opportunity to practise government. Most important of all factors in the development of that power is the responsibility for controlling public policy, and the necessity of paying for mistakes when made. The Nationalist opposition in the Indian legislature is factious, divided, intransigent. It is so because it is not held straight by genuine responsibility—by the certainty that it will have to take control, if its criticisms of the administration prove effective.

The opinion of the average Englishman in India, that "democracy will never work here," is just as valuable as the opinion of the average Englishman in America about 1770, in Ireland about 1920, in Wales to-day, and in connection with the Labour Party in England to-day. It is noteworthy that in

the last two cases the fact that democracy *does* somehow manage to work has no effect in altering the energy and zeal with which the opinion is still held!

The Indian Nationalist maintains, first, that democracy has never been given a fair trial in India; second, that even if after a fair trial (that is, under conditions of *Swaraj*) it should not be found to be suited to Indian conditions, the responsibility for changing it, and for developing some form of government more suitable, can and must be borne by India alone.

The Indian States.

The Nationalist opinion is similar with regard to the other great problems which lie ahead of a free India.

She must find for herself the right method of reconciling Hindu and Musalman claims. However baffling this problem may be in British India, it scarcely exists in the Indian States. Therefore, the Nationalist maintains, it is reasonable to believe that Indians can find their own solution for it.

So also with the position of the Indian States. All that the Nationalist asks is that India should be left free to work out the right relationship between herself and these children of her own. He is not intimidated by the threats of war and rapine which are said to have been uttered by the more truculent princes a generation ago, when the national movement first came into prominence. The princes, after all, are Indians, and their interests stand or fall with those of the country as a whole.

The Nationalist is not himself convinced that the Western methods of democratic government now being carefully nurtured in his country are necessarily the best for her; and he is not afraid of a future in which far-reaching constitutional experiments will have to be made, and in which the contribution of the Indian princes to the new India must of necessity be a very great one. All that he asks is that India should be left free to experiment in her own way, and to enlist upon her own terms the help of those who have had experience of responsible administration for so many generations, to the end that all Indians may co-operate in the enterprise of discovering the best form of government for the country as a whole.

It is possible that a wide measure of decentralisation may be needful, by means of which the Indian States may be left free to develop in their own way, whilst the various provinces of British India—which stand now at very different stages of political evolution—may be given governmental institutions suited to the stages which they have reached. A loose federalism may quite probably be the right arrangement. But whatever the solution may be, India must have freedom to work it out for herself. She can no longer be kept in leading-strings. Quite obviously the day of paternalistic control is past, and the effort to retain it can only result in a tragedy far greater than the tragedies of 1775 and 1920.

If India is treated with generosity now, she will loyally remain a free member of the British Family of Nations; but a few more years of paternalism—

however well-intentioned, and however obviously a merely temporary expedient—can only result in an antagonism which must eventually lead to her complete severance from that Family of Nations.

Financial Autonomy.

With regard to the immediate future, it is to be noticed that Mr. Gandhi, when asked not long ago for a definition of what he means by *Swaraj*, replied tersely "financial autonomy." At the present time there is undoubtedly a large body of Nationalist opinion which would endorse his opinion in this respect.

As was the case during the years leading up to the revolt of the American Colonies, the control of the public purse has become the first objective of Nationalist aspirations. Once this is granted, everything else, it is felt, can sooner or later be adjusted.

Lack of the power of the purse is responsible for the extreme exasperation aroused by such incidents as the forcing through of an increase in the Salt Tax (which affects even the poorest outcaste), and a refusal to reduce military expenditure.

It is believed that real financial autonomy could be used as the means of preventing the increase of Western industrialisation, and of breaking the hold which the West has fastened upon Indian economic life. It would render possible the revival of cottage industry upon a scale as yet undreamt of, and would thus go far to solve the problem of poverty. It would make necessary the development of new constitutional machinery, which would bring the fact of *Swaraj* home to the people as a

whole, and so would foster in them the spirit needful to the development of a new India. For these and a variety of other reasons, financial autonomy is to the enlightened Nationalist the immediate objective of his aspirations. If he gets that, he feels he will in due time have everything.

The gift is already half given. It would be a wise and generous measure to place the provincial and central Legislatures in really effective control of what they already possess in name under the Reformed Constitution of 1920. This step, if taken without delay, would in all probability save the situation in India.

The more distant Future.

With regard to the more distant future, the Indian Nationalist undoubtedly looks upon *Swaraj* as a means for counteracting the present-day tendencies towards the replacing of the ancient Hindu organisation of industry and society by a hybrid Western system. He believes that *Swaraj* will mean the checking of the rush towards the great cities: that it will mean a re-establishing of the old village polity, economically reinforced by the existence of a subsidiary form of industry in every home, and politically rejuvenated by the revival of the old village councils, which in the past made the little village world almost independent of outside control. He believes that *Swaraj* will mean a greatly cheapened administration, and therefore less Land Tax to pay. He believes that there will be a revival under *Swaraj* of the Hindu ideal of *Dharma*: that the caste system, purged of its inequalities and intoler-

ances, will effectively control once more a soci
order in which each man and each community wi
work at the task hereditarily allotted under tha
system, so that there will be work for all, and
motive of service instead of greed behind al
industry.

If he is a wide-spirited man, the Nationalis
believes also that India as a whole will realise tha
she has a *Dharma* to fulfil towards the rest of th
world. She will recognise the responsibility lai
upon her by her traditions regarding the spiritua
basis of all social organisation and all industry
She will convert the world to a belief in *Ahims*
(the refusal to use violence), in *Satyagraha* (reliance
upon the unaided force of truth), in *Dharma* (the
ideal of service to God and man as the motive of
all action). She may even become a missionary nation proclaiming, by the example of her own ordered well-being, the folly and delusion of war, of cut-throat competitive industry, of exploitation, of greed and self-serving as the motive of action.

These are the aspirations of the Indian Nationalist. They are no doubt vague, and in a sense crudely idealistic. But they can scarcely be called unpractical, since *Swaraj* has already been promised by Great Britain, in the solemn declaration of 1917, and since the Hindu system has, after all, not yet been vitally wounded by the selfish and violent elements in Western civilisation.

Once more it must be insisted that the centre and focus of the modern situation in India is, not the question whether these aspirations are or are not

visionary and unpractical, but *the fact that they are entertained*, and entertained by the vast majority of educated Indians.

The most important phenomenon in connection with these aspirations, a phenomenon which it is very difficult for the Westerner to comprehend, is that they are religious. India is a goddess, to whom not merely loyalty but worship is owed by her children. Her service is a cult: her claims are superior to all mundane considerations. Her future of freedom and greatness is the object of passionate religious vows, of earnest prayers, of fanatical enthusiasms. The real nature of the modern national movement is only to be understood in the light of religion. And it is in the field of religion that the future of India will eventually be decided.

But in the meantime the policy of Great Britain towards India must be one of sympathy, of generosity and of freedom.

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